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A

DEFENSE

OF SOME

Important Doctrines

OF THE

GOSPEL,

IN TWENTY SIX

SERMONS.

Most of which were PREACHED in

LIME-STREET.

By several MINISTERS.

VOL. II.

L O N D O N :

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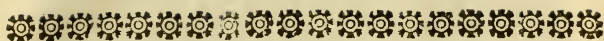
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To the angel of the church at Sardis write, These things says he who has the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars ; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest and art dead: Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain and are ready to die ; for I have not found thy works perfect before God : Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast and repent : If therefore thou wilt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee page 567.

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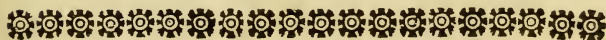


S E R-



THE
DOCTRINE
OF
CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS
OPENED.
IN THREE
SERMONS.

By THOMAS BRADBURY,
Minister of the Gospel.



VOL. II.

B.



❖ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ପ୍ରକାର ପ୍ରାଣୀର ଶରୀରରେ ଶକ୍ତିର ପ୍ରବାହ ଶୁଦ୍ଧ ଶକ୍ତିର ପ୍ରବାହ ସହିତ ସମାନ ନୁହେଁ ।

ROM. viii. 32.
*He spared not his own Son,
 but delivered him up for
 us all.*

T H E S E words bear a full proportion to the design for which I have taken them ; that is, they shew us the sufferings of Christ, in their *reality*, their *greatness*, and their *imputation*. That Mes-
Dan. ix. 26.
 siah the Prince is come, that he was *cut off*, but not for himself, that he suffer'd, *the just for the unjust*, to bring
1 Pet. iii. 18.
 us to God ; he finish'd transgression, made an end of sin ; he *put it away*, by
Heb. ix. 26.
 the offering of himself ; he made recon-
 ciliation

Of Christ's Sufferings.

ciliation for iniquity, and brought in an everlasting righteousness.

As the doctrine of the cross is the glory of our religion, 'tis the foundation of all our hope: The apostle brings it in with a connexion; for, saith he in the former verse, *if God be for us, who can be against us?* The consequent is inseparable, the argument invincible, and therefore his care is to let it be seen that the *antecedent* is true; to which purpose he offers the text in evidence: *He that spared not his own Son, but gave him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things?*

Ver. 28. He had before observed that all things shall *work together* for our good, and now that all things shall be *given in* as our property. According to what he says in another place, *All things are yours*; whether *Paul* or *Apollos*, or *Cephas*, life or death, things present, or things to come, all is yours. The promise takes a large compass; as to the matter of our enjoyment, it reaches to *all things*; as to the way of it, it is *given* freely; he does it liberally, and upbraideth not; so that we are not straitned in God, either as to the work of his hand, or the design of his heart. As he is a sun and a shield, as he gives grace and glory, so he with-holds *no good thing* from those that walk uprightly.

James i. 5. And

Psal. lxxxiv. 11.

And we may be assured of what he *will do* by what he *has done*. If there is any thing that he would have grudged, or held back, it must have been the very mercy that he has bestowed already: But 'tis doing as much as can be, to give us *his own Son*; and as it is impossible any future grant should go higher, we may look upon what is past as a pledge of what is to come.

The doctrine of the text is, that *God spared not his own Son, but gave him up for us all*; and the application we are allowed to make of it is as great and happy, as the truth it self; dear and certain that *he will with him freely give us all things*.

'Tis the former of these that I would now consider; and cannot think upon any better way of doing it for expedition and plainness, than by making the parts of the text to be the plan of the sermon.

You find the apostle is speaking of the most high *God*, that he is for us: As *David* says, *The Lord is on my side*, I Psal. cxviii. 5. will not fear what man can do unto me; 'tis the argument that Christ himself has used, *The Lord God will help me*, therefore I shall not be confounded; *he is* I sai. i. 8, 9; near that justifies me; who is he that will condemn me: And thus the apostle

concludes, that it signifies very little who is against us, seeing *God is for us*. Now this he proves, from what he has done already.

1. He appointed *his own Son* to be the Trustee, the Security, the price and assurance of our salvation.

2. This he did to that extremity, as *not to spare him* from any torments that human nature was able to endure.

3. To all these sufferings there was a divine order; he *deliver'd* him up.

4. This was *for us all*, in our room and stead; he was punish'd, that we might have a way to escape; and therefore he might say to divine justice as he did to those that apprehended him, If

John xviii. 8. ye seek me, *let those go* their way.

These are the plain and easy contents of the words, and they amount to this proposition, that

“ All the troubles that Christ endured
 “ were, by a divine appointment, in the
 “ room of his people.” The blow
 which they deserved fell upon him:
 It was thus ordained, 'twas thus re-
 ceiv'd. He was wounded *for our trans-*
gression; he was bruised *for our ini-*
quities; the chastisement of *our peace*
 was upon him, and by his stripes *we*
are healed. What manner of love is
 this; to give us *so great a Person*, as
 God's

Of Christ's Sufferings.

7.

God's own Son? to do it in *so dear a way*, as not to spare him; and that with *so kind a view*, that it should not only be *to us*, but *for us*: These are things that deserve to be taken apart.

I. I begin with the dignity of the gift, the thing, the Person that God bestow'd, and that was *his own Son*. He is so called,

- § 1. By way of distinction from others.
- § 2. By way of eminency in himself.

1. It is a *distinguishing* title; you will find the name scatter'd abroad, as the whole family, both in heaven and in earth, are called after him.

(1.) By *creation* we are all the children of God: He has made us, and not Psal. c. 3. we our selves; we are the work of his hands, and the sheep of his pasture. There is one God our Father, of whom 1 Cor. viii. 6. are all things, and we of him: This is Acts xvii. 28. the doctrine of nature; the apostle speaks of it with an approbation at *Athens*, as one of your own poets have said, *We are his offspring*.

(2.) *Angels* possess the name with a dignity above us, as they had an existence before us; for when he laid out the partition between the earth and wa-

ter, when he set a compass upon the face of the deep, the morning stars sang together, and all *the sons of God* shouted for joy.

(3.) He has sometimes dropt the name upon *magistrates*, principalities, and powers: I have said ye are *gods*, and all of you *children of the most high*; but very often we find, among *the basest of men*, those whom he set over the kingdoms of the earth, where it cannot signify any thing that is either great or good.

(4.) He gave the title to the *Jews*, and did it by way of distinction: Thus he directs *Moses* to tell *Pharaoh*; *Israel* is *my son*, and my first-born; let *my son* go that he may serve me: Thus he upbraids them, when they prov'd a foolish people, and unwise, and very ill requited the Lord, who was *their Father* that had bought them; that is, he had made and established them. 'Tis in these terms he proclaims their return; I am *a Father* to *Israel*, and *Ephraim* is *my first-born*: Nor was this a new thing in the earth; for before the flood he was pleased, in that very way, to separate one part of the world from the other: As we are told, *The sons of God*, the race that called upon the name of the Lord, saw the daughters of men, by which they defiled *their separation*.

(5.) He

(5.) He has children by *sanctification*, to them he gives power or authority to become *the sons of God*; being *born* not John i. 12, 13. of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but *of God*. These are renewed *in the image of him*, who created them: He is a Witness to the work of which he is the Author; that they are *children* and heirs of God. Rom. viii. 16, With this principle he tries them, and ¹⁷ by that he owns them, saying, Touch no unclean thing, and I will be *a Father* 2 Cor. vi. 17, to you, and ye shall be *my sons* and ¹⁸ daughters, saith the Lord God Almighty.

(6.) He bestows the title upon them by way of *adoption*. In the place where it was said to them, ye are not my people, Hos. i. x. there they shall be called *the children of* Rom. ix. 25, *the living God*. We are predestinated to ²⁶ *the adoption of sons* by Jesus Christ; and Eph. i. 5. *the Spirit of adoption* in our hearts, is to Rom. viii. 15. make us cry *Abba, Father*.

(7.) With this name they are carried up to *heaven*: He brings *many sons* to Heb. ii. 10. glory. Upon this head, Christ and the John x. 30. Father are one; they both speak the same language. 'Tis proclaim'd upon the saints arrival there, he that overcomes shall inherit all things; and I will be a God to him, and he shall be *my son*: Thus he speaks of the whole Rev. xxi. 7.

Heb. ii. 13. number ; Behold, here am I, and *the children* whom God has given me.

With this variety is the name diffused and distributed quite through the bible, but there is never any danger of misapplying it ; for the term, *His own Son*, is plainly distinguished from every one of them ; That belongs to none but Christ: He has, indeed, a name *above every name*; and though the word may be given about at large, yet there is a sense in it peculiar to him ; he has it all to himself. Of his own will he *begat us* by the word of truth, and yet he is *the only begotten* of the Father ; though he brings *many sons* to glory, yet, as we are told in the parable, he has *only one Son*, and his well beloved.

James i. 18.

John i. 18.

Psal. ii. 7.

Heb. i. 5.

2. When God calls him his own Son, it is by way of *eminence*. This was the Father's decree, this was our Lord's declaration, that he said unto him, *Thou art my Son* : And the apostle looks upon it as a title that reaches above every creature ; for *to which of the angels* said he at any time, *Thou art my Son* ; this day have I begotten thee? It signifies that in him, that it never did, and never can do, in any other ; and you may take it to be comprehensive of these four things.

- 1. Equality of nature.
- 2. Perpetuity of delight.
- 3. Unity of counsel.
- 4. Communion of glory.

1. The term, his own Son, can import no less than an *equality* in nature. It does so every where : All nations of men are of *one blood*. Adam begat a son Acts xvii. 26. in *his own image*, and his own likeness, Gen. v. 3. altogether such a one as himself. Nature is the same in a child, as it is in the fulness of stature ; the measure of a perfect man in a beggar and a prince, in a fool and a philosopher, in sickness or in health. 'Tis for this reason that Christ is so often call'd *the Son of man* ; he seems to use it with pleasure and frequency, that we may understand by it, that he was really, as we are, *made of a* Gal. iv. 4. *woman*, and in all things *like unto his* Heb. ii. 14, 17. *brethren* ; forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he himself likewise *took part of the same*.

And if being call'd the Son of man, does prove the *human* nature, the Son of God must of necessity signify in him the *divine*. The derivation of a son from a father, makes a precedence and dependance according to the train that God has laid before us, but still it leaves
the

the *nature* the same in both : But as all derivation is to be thrown out when we speak of God, so the title belongs to none but *him, who is before all things, and by whom all things consist* : Nor has Christ a claim to it, but upon the same perfections with the Father ; that he is *Alpha and Omega*, the first and the last, the beginning and the end ; and therefore though he is a Son, yet the name whereby he shall be called, is the *mighty God*, the everlasting *Father*. The words are used in promiscuous language, as meaning the same thing : We know
 Col. i. 17. that *the Son of God* is come, and has given us an understanding that we may know him that is true, and are in him that is true, even in *his Son* Jesus Christ; this is the *true God*, and eternal life.
 Rev. i. 8.
 Ifai. ix. 6:
 3 John v. 20.

The *Jews* would never have been offended, had he taken the title with those limitations, that several in our day have put upon it : But they sought to kill him, because he said that *God was his Father*, making himself *equal with God*. Πατέρα ἰδὼν εἶπε τὸν Θεόν, he said that God was his own Father ; and he says not one word to shew them that they had mistaken him : He leaves them possess'd of their notion, as a very right one, that *the Son of God* was *equal with God* : They knew his words imported
 John v. 18. thus

thus much, *I and my Father are one*; John x. 30, upon which they aver, for a good work 33, 37, 38. we stone thee not, but for blasphemy, because that thou being a man, *makest thy self God*, though he never said any more than that he was *the Son of God*; and, as a proof of that, he appeals to *the works of his Father*. They are so call'd, not merely because the Father had given him them to do, but as they were works which none, beside the Father could do, such as required an almighty arm; the Father that is in me he does the works; and I do them, that ye may believe that *I am in the Father*, and the Father in me.

2. This title, *His own Son*, signifies a perpetuity of love: Thus he speaks 1 Cor. i. 24. in the name of wisdom, (as being the wisdom of God, and the power of God) The Lord possessed me in the beginning Prov. viii. 22, of his way, before his works of old; 1 23, 24, &c. was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was; then was I by him, as one brought up with him, *daily his delight*, and rejoicing always before him. He speaks very often concerning an unity of nature, and yet with a plain distinction of persons.

He is call'd the only begotten, who lies *in the bosom of the Father*. This John i. 18. was the witness given to him; he had it

at

at his *baptism* in a voice from heaven;
 Matt. iii. 17. This is *my beloved Son*, in whom I am
 well pleas'd : 'Twas repeated in the *holy*
 2 Pet. i. 18. *mount*, when the voice came again from
 the excellent glory; as if when the Fa-
 ther bare witness of him, it would be in
 no other language than he had used be-
 fore, *This is my beloved Son*, in whom I
 am pleased.

This he knew quite thro' the course
 John viii. 29. of life : He that sent me is with me ;
 the Father has not left me alone, because
 I do always the things that *please him* ;
 and therefore though there are many
 Matt. xii. 18. thousands *beloved* of God, his elect, in
 whom *his soul delighteth*, yet not as He
 is : So that when we are said to be ac-
 Eph. i. 6. cepted, it is in him, as *the beloved* : He
 1 Pet. ii. 4. alone is the *chosen of God*, and *precious* ;
 we are translated into the kingdom of
 Col. i. 13. this *dear Son*.

These characters are included in the
 title, and ought to be remembered. When
 we come to consider that he gave *him*
 up for us all ; not a servant, but *a Son* ;
 not a rebel, a son that causeth shame,
 but one who was daily *his delight* ; the
 Heb. i. 3. brightness of his glory, the express
 image of his own subsistence.

3. It signifies an unity of *counsel*.
 Rom. xi. 34. Now, as none has understood the mind
 1521. xl. 13. of the Lord, there is none with whom
 he

he took counsel ; he put no trust in his Job xi. 18. saints, and charged his angels with folly ; so how great a name is that by which the child born to us is call'd Wonder- Isai. ix. 6. ful, *Counsellor* ? He maintains it and repeats it, even after the *Jews* had resolved to batter him with stones, for making himself equal with God. He goes on to assert this equality, that the Son can do nothing *of himself*, but what he John v. 19, 20. sees the Father do : The words, *Doing nothing of himself*, are not a diminution ; the meaning is, that there is a perpetual and an equal concord between them ; and it might have been said as truly of the Father, that he can do nothing of himself ; for *whatever things the Father does, these does the Son likewise* ; for the Father loves the Son, and *shews him all things* that himself does ; whereas, had there been an inequality, it might have been said in that empire, that the heart of the king is unsearchable ; but as the Spirit *searcheth all things*, yea, 1 Cor. ii. 10. the deep things of God, so the Son *knows all* that is in the Deity. That must be an infinite mind that is equal to an infinite nature ; no man knows who Matt. xi. 27. the Son is but the Father, and who the Father is but the Son.

And is it not a wonder that he should part with *him*, and give *him* up for us
2
all,

all, with whom he took counsel? 'Tis plain, that the redemption that he came *for*, and the sufferings that he came *to*, were agreed on in *the counsel of peace* between them both.

4. The title, *His own Son*, signifies a communion of *glory*. We may say to him, as we do to the Father, *Thine is the kingdom*, and the power and the glory. There is nothing like an excepting clause in all his commission, such an one as *Pharaoh* gave *Joseph*; According to thy word, shall all my people be ruled, and be thou over the land of *Egypt*, *only in the throne will I be greater than thee*: Instead of that, he speaks of *a glory* that he had *with the Father* before the world was. This he promises, this he demands: 'Twas *his will*, that they whom the Father had given him, should be with him where he was, that they might behold the glory which the Father had given him; for, saith he, *thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world*. 'Tho' the highest insolence of *Lucifer* was, that he set his throne as the throne of God, yet, without any inequality, we read that *the throne of God, and of the Lamb*, is in heaven, and *his servants* shall serve *him*. And as they upon mount *Sion* have their Father's name in their

their foreheads, there is as much said of the Son, that they shall see *his* face, and *his* name shall be in their foreheads.

This is he whom God has given for us, *The Lord of glory*. 'Tis brought in James ii. 1. as a noble aggravation of what he endured, that then he was *in the form of* Phil. ii. 6. *God*, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God; he made himself of no reputation, and being found in fashion as a man, took on him the form of a servant, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross.

These are things that I believe to be included within the glorious title of *God's own Son*, and we ought to keep them in remembrance, on purpose to see the greatness of the love that gave him for us, and say with the apostle, Thanks be to God for his *unspeakable gift*, 2 Cor. iz. 13.

II. We read of this wonderful Person, that God did *not spare him*, which signifies the greatness, the extremity of his troubles. The phrase is full and strong, and carries in it a vast meaning; he submitted to the utmost anguish and bitterness. You will understand the word, as you do when it is used in a case that is opposite, *I will spare them* in the day Mal. iii. 17. that I make up my jewels, as a man *spares his own son* that serves him. God's

sparing his people then, when he is putting them among his jewels, when they are strung together in the glories of a common salvation, means every thing that can enter into their happiness. We may all know and feel the sense of the comparison, that though a father's love to a son that serves him, is called no more than *sparing him*, yet who does not see what a length it reaches? That it comprehends a fulness of delight, a recompence of reward, a confidence, a satisfaction, an open heart and treasure.

Well, in proportion to such an affection as you believe to be contain'd in a man's sparing his own son, and God's sparing his people, when they go to heaven, are we to take these words in this other application, that he *spared not* his own Son, *i. e.* he neither hid him from the punishment, nor excused him any particular share in it; he made not the least abatement of what was owing to the guilt of those that he suffer'd for; *He trod the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of almighty God.* This you may apply to,

Rev. xix. 15.

1. His continual meanness.
2. His pains and bodily sufferings,
3. The horror of darkness that came upon his soul.

4. The

4. The weight of the law that he was subject to.

5. The scandal of his death.

6. The particular energy that the Father himself gave to all these troubles. There was no abatement in any of them; he drank the last dregs of the cup; not a drop was left or spilt upon the ground.

(1.) You see that God did not spare him from the perpetual *meanneſs* of his life. As ſoon as he was made of a woman, he made himſelf of *no reputation*; Gal. iv. 4. he came *empty* into the world, though Phil. ii. 7. in him dwelt all *the fulneſs of the God-head* Col. ii. 9. bodily: He was to come of the race of their kings, and was raiſed up Luke i. 69. as an horn of ſalvation in the houſe of his ſervant *David*; but this muſt be at a time when *the tabernacle of David was fallen*; as if God had caſt off and abhor'd, and been wroth with his anointed: He had made void the covenant of his ſervant, and *profaned his crown*; he had made his glory to ceaſe, and caſt his throne to the ground. *Bethlehem*, the Micah v. 2. place of his birth was become *little* Matt. ii. 11. among the princes of *Judah*; and ſo crouded with the noble branches of the family, that when ſhe brought forth her firſt-born Child, ſhe laid him in a Luke ii. 7. *manger*, becauſe there was no room for him in the inn.

Luke ii. 9.

What a *glory* was it that open'd the tidings to the shepherds, when they themselves were within a circle of light from heaven; here is a wall of fire round about them, and no wonder when the great glory was come in the midst of them? To hear the angels preaching the everlasting gospel, telling them tidings of great joy, that to them was born that day in the city of *David* a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. Every word founded the magnificence of this *great thing* that came to pass; and in the same breath to be told, that instead of seeing the Lord of glory, the Prince of the kings of the earth, they should see a *Child wrapt in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger*; this made the narration the most unequal and disproportion'd that ever was in the world.

In his youth, after he had astonish'd
 Luke ii. 47, the *doctors* at *Jerusalem*, he goes down,
 51. and was *subject* to his *parents* at *Nazareth*; as if he was determin'd to quench the light of *Israel*.

And as his *fame* increased, so did his
 Psal. lxxix. 20. *reproach*; as he complains in prophecy,
 reproach has broken my heart, I am full of heaviness; upon which they hid
 Isai. liii. 3. their faces from him, they *despis'd* and
 Chap. iv 2. esteem'd him not. Though he was the branch of the Lord, beautiful and glorious,

rious, yet he came as a root out of the dry ground: All they who were looking for him saw no comeliness in him; he was despised and *rejected of men*, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.

He who was to have the government Isai. vi. 7. upon his shoulders, had not *where to* Luke ix. 5. lay his head; though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became *poor*: He liv'd 2 Cor. viii. 9. upon the voluntary contribution of his hearers; they ministred to him of their Luke viii. 3. substance. Though the great men from the east brought him presents, gold, Matt. ii. 11. frankincense and myrrhe, as the first-fruits of a glorious empire, yet the King of kings is a *Servant of rulers*; and the Isai. xlix. 7. desire of all nations is one whom his Hag. ii. 7. own nation abhors: Though the kings Psal. lxxii. 4. of *Sheba* and *Seba* would offer gifts, yet he cannot pay his tribute-money till he Matt. xvii. 27. sends for it out of a fish's mouth.

(2.) You may refer this to his *bodily* Psal. xlv. 2. pains and sufferings. He who was fair- Isai. lii. 14. er than the sons of men, has his *vi-* face marred more than any man, and his *form* more than the sons of men: Rev. i. 16. He whose countenance is now as the Isai. l. 6. sun, when it shines in all its strength, hid not his face from *shame and spitting*; Rev. xx. 11. and though the time will come that from his countenance the heaven and the

John iv. 6. earth shall flee away, yet they *cover'd his face* and smote him.

He knew the meaning of hunger and thirst, of cruel mockings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonments: He was scourg'd as a malefactor, had a crown of thorns platted upon his head:

Psal. xxii. 16 *Greedy dogs* came against him, they pierced his hands and his feet: His *bones* were all out of joint, his *heart* like wax melted in the midst of his bowels: They gave him gall for his *meat*, and in his thirst they gave him vinegar to *drink*: A body seems to be prepared for him, that he might bear our sins in his own body on the tree; so that we see him rack'd and tore; no soundness in his flesh, because of God's anger. This is he that came by water and *blood*, for they pierced his side, and forthwith there came out *blood* and water.

Heb. x. 5.

1 Pet. ii. 24.

Psa'. xxxviii.

3.

1 John v. 6.

John xix. 34.

(3.) He had a horror of great darkness upon his *soul*; which shews it to be no supernatural Spirit, but of the very same nature with ours, capable of grief, and appointed to it. This he desires his disciples to observe and attend; *His soul was exceeding sorrowful*, even unto death, and therefore he orders them to watch. Grief in them was able to cheat it self, it sunk them to *sleep*; but it kept him awake, and his sweat was

Matt. xxvi.

38.

like great drops of blood falling to the earth. Luke xxii. 44.

(4.) That which press'd him so much was the weight of the *law*. He was Gal. iv. 4. made under the law, and as it is said Chap. iii. 10. that such people are under the *curse*, it was the curse that we are redeemed from; for no man could, by any means, redeem this our elder *brother*, or pay Psal. xlix. 7. unto God a ransom for him; no, he paid himself as a *ransom* for us. 1 Tim. ii. 6. The righteousness of the law speaks in this wise, that the man who does these things Rom. x. 5. shall live in them; he did these things with perfection and purity, and yet nevertheless the law that was ordained to *life*, was to him a sentence of *death*; for though obedience and punishment were divided, so that no person could have both, yet in him they are united: Here Eccl. viii. is a righteous servant, to whom it hap- ¹⁴pens, according to the work of the wicked; for upon him was laid the iniquity Isai. liii. 6. of us all.

(5.) The scandal of his *death*. God had said to the *Jews*, Cursed is every Deut. xxi. 23. one that is hanged on a tree: The *Romans* had no such tradition, and therefore he could never have suffer'd but in this *due time*, that the sceptre was de- Rom. v. 6. parted from *Judah*. The *Romans* would Gen. xlix. 10.

never have found him guilty of such a crime ; the *Jews* would never have inflicted such a punishment, but he is to be deliver'd to the *Gentiles*. *Pilate* had a mind to be clear of it, and therefore throws it all out of his own hands ;

John xviii. 31, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The *Jews* therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death, *that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, signifying what death he should die.* He told them

Chap. xix. 4. plainly, after this Take ye him, and crucify him ; I found no fault in him ; upon which they reply, We have a law, and by that law he ought to die, *because he made himself the Son of God.*

Blasphemy is his sin, which none but the *Jews* would have call'd so : Crucifixion is his punishment, which none but the *Romans* would have made so ; and therefore it is thus order'd, that the

Psal. ii. 1. *Heathen* shall rage at the same time that the *people* imagin'd a vain thing ; and, that he might in every sense of the word be *a curse for us*, he is to have it not only from the moral law, but from the ceremonial. They took him, and *hanged him on a tree* ; and therefore it is said, when he endured the cross, he *despised the shame.*

Acts v. 30.

Heb. xiii. 2.

(6.) That

(6.) That which is principally to be minded, is the particular energy that the Father gave to all these troubles; even this was the doing of the Lord. Isai. liii. 4. The Jews took him to be stricken, *smitten of God*, and afflicted. They argued, as *David* foretold they would, let us persecute and take him, because *God has forsaken him*; all the varieties of trouble that seiz'd him were under a divine appointment. He who settles the bounds of our habitation, provided none for him; he chasten'd him, and gave him over to death. The Lord God Isai. l. 4, 5, waken'd and open'd his ear, morning by morning, that he might give his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that pluck'd off the hair.

He begs of the Father, like one who had *learned obedience by the thing that* Heb. v. 8. *he suffer'd*, all things are possible to thee, let this cup pass from me; and, if Matt. xxvi. it may not pass from me, except I drink ³⁹ it, thy will be done: Well, it was his will, the cup which the Father had given him to drink. There was nothing that look'd like sparing a Son that serves him. The law was *in* his heart, and we may say it went *to* his heart; he felt it there, which made his heart faint within him.

Though

Eph. v. 2.

Though he was offer'd as a sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour, yet who would have thought, that when he pleads and groans, and cries and argues under his burden, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from the voice of my roaring?

Psal. xxii. 42.

Matt. xxvii.

46.

This was so evident, that they insult him upon it; Let us see, say they, whether *Elias* will come to take him down.

Mark xv. 36.

Matt. xvi. 6.

Luke ix. 31.

Elias met him in the mount of transfiguration, and there *spake* of his decease at *Jerusalem*, but he could do nothing to *prevent* it. He foretold, on mount *Tabor*, what happen'd on mount *Calvary*; and it was still more daring to say, *Let God deliver him*, if he will have him; for he said, I am the Son of God.

Isai. liii. 10.

Zech. xiii. 7.

Jer. xlvii. 6,

7.

Upon the whole, you see the truth and propriety of those astonishing words, that *it pleased the Father to bruise him*, and put him to grief. I will not say it was threaten'd, but it was design'd, when God proclaim'd, *Awake, O sword*, against the man that is my fellow; smite the shepherd. There could never be a greater occasion to plead, as the prophet does; *O thou sword of the Lord, how long will it be e'er thou be quiet?* Put up thy self into

into the scabbard, rest and be still.
But the answer was ready, How can
it be quiet, when the *Lord has given*
it such a charge, and has so appointed
it? For as he spared him not, it was
he who *delivered him up*.





S E R M O N II.

R O M. viii. 32.

*He spared not his own Son,
but delivered him up for
us all.*



THE apostle takes care to let us know, that there was a *divine appointment* of all the sorrows and grief with which our Lord became acquainted. He *gave himself for our sins*, that he might Gal. i. 4. deliver us from this present evil world, *according to the will of God*, and our Father.

That second causes had their share and their guilt, is true: The envy of the priests, Matt. xxvii. the rage of the Heathen, the jealousy of ^{18,} the

Pfal. ii. 1. the rulers, the superstition of the rab-
 Acts iii. 17. ble, the influence of *Satan*, the avarice
 John xiii. 27. of *Judas*; these are placed as an over-
 ruling providence ordained or permitted
 them. But still there was a supreme
 guiding cause, that quicken'd the move-
 ment, and turned the wheels.

What *he* did, was holy, just, and
 good. The malignity of the several
 creatures obey'd his will, without pollu-
 ting it: To them it was a scene of wic-
 kedness, the lust of the flesh, and of
 the mind; malice, pride, and envy,
 were so many *snare*s of the devil, by
 which he led them captive, and in that
 view the *crucifying of the Lord of glory*,
 was the greatest impiety that ever hu-
 man nature run into: But take it as a
 model, laid by an all-comprehending
 Psal. cxlvii. 5. mind, an *understanding that is infinite*,
 and we may say, here was a train of the
 best *means*, in order to accomplish the
 greatest *end*.

Never did the divine *goodness* appear
 in a nobler design; never did the divine
wisdom shine out in a better method;
 never was any thing more *becoming* him,
 Heb. ii. 10. of whom are all things, and by whom
 are all things, than in bringing many
 sons to glory, to make the Captain of
 their salvation perfect, *through his suf-
 ferings*.

The

The scripture has taken a great deal of care to keep this in view, quite through the story of Jesus Christ, and him crucified; that nothing happen'd to him, but in pursuance of a counsel and purpose, that was moved and agreed to before the world began; and therefore it is spoke of in my text, as the doing of the Lord.

Had we been told of the *priests*, who drew up the charge, and stirr'd up the people, that *they* spared him not; had this been said of those that reviled him, that cut him with thorns, or nails, or spears, we could easily have understood it: Had the apostle told us, that he was deliver'd up, by his countrymen, to *Pilate*, and by him back again to them, Acts iii. 13. the phrase would have stood without any mystery: But when we read of his being humbled and grieved, neglected and wounded, and all this said of *the Father*, that thus used *his own Son*, that he did not spare him, that he *deliver'd him up*, it is a thing that man's wisdom can neither give nor take; and therefore the Holy Spirit has been very abundant to carry this quite through the Bible, as you will see by a long train of particulars.

1. It was agreed on in the counsel between the Father and Son.

2. It

2. It was foretold in the very dawning of the love and kindness that appear'd towards men.

3. It was designed in the whole frame of devotion, which God appointed among his people.

4. To this I may add, that these shadows were discharged and abolished, as soon as ever the thing signified was accomplish'd.

5. 'Tis what the prophets in their several ages gave a lineal witness to.

6. 'Tis a thing of which Christ himself was appriz'd, and to which he consented.

7. 'Tis what the human nature was prepared and disposed for.

8. This he stav'd off, till the time appointed for it came, to shew that it was always in his power to prevent it.

9. Then he went out to meet it, and received it not only with submission, but obedience.

10. There is to be an eternal memorial of it in heaven; which shews, that the design was *laid* in the place where it is to be *admired*.

I have thrown these things into the order and situation that the word of God has given them; and I doubt not they will let us see that we ought to look a great deal higher than to the powers

powers of darkness in the sufferings of Christ: That it was not merely the push of envy; the produce of malice, treachery, deceit, and murder: But it is to be consider'd as his own obedience to death, even the death of the cross. It was also the Father's appointment, what he demanded in law, and what he delighted in, as God only wise, who is blessed for ever: According to the apostle's distinction, when he argues with the Jews; *Him, being delivered by the* Acts ii. 23; *determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.*

First, he observes *their action* in the whole gradation; *they* took him, and crucified him, and slew him. *Secondly*, they did it *by wicked hands*, and wicked hearts: He could never afford them any better name than *betrayers and murderers*; Chap. vii. 52; and yet, *Thirdly*, the Person thus us'd, was *deliver'd*, ἐκδοτῶ, given out, surrender'd, and appointed to the self-same lot. *Fourthly*, this was by *the foreknowledge of God*; he could tell that so it would be: Nay, *Fifthly*, it is by his *determinate counsel*, ἐκλὴν ὁρμημέν, what he had framed and fix'd, and brought into a certain sphere, that it should *most surely come to pass*:

I. We may say, with the scriptures of truth, that the sufferings of Christ were agreed on between the Father and the Son. Indeed, this is *the secret of the Lord*, and among his *invisible things*; nor could we ever have known them, had they not been reveal'd to us by his Spirit, as now they are.

We are expressly told, that Christ, as
 Zech. vi. 12. *a Branch*, should grow up out of his place; and this we know to be out of
 Isai. lii. 2. *a dry ground*; and though he was to
 John ii. 19. *build the temple of the Lord*, yet the temple of his body is to be destroy'd, in order to it. He should, indeed, *bear the glory*, but before that he must bear our griefs, and carry our sorrows; and, though he should *sit upon his throne*, he is there as *a Priest*, as one who has *somewhat to offer*; and all this scheme of humiliation and trouble flows from *the counsel of peace* that was between them both.

Ver. 10. 'Twas *the pleasure of the Lord* that prosper'd in his hand; not only what the Lord pleased to appoint, but the very thing *in which his soul delighted*; the darling project, the favourite article, *the chief of the ways of God*, which he magnified above all his name. There was a model of glory laid, that would both out-shine the creation, and out-

last

ast it : 'Twill hold when the first heaven and the first earth are pass'd away. Rev. xxi. 1. When he has rubb'd out all the figures of Deity, that are engraven upon the universe, he reserves a memorial that shall endure for ever, and that is in the redemption that he has purchased.

Here are a people to be saved who were sold ; and therefore, to make his love triumphant, they are *bought with a price* : The Person who pays it is the Son of God ; the thing that he lays down for it is *his precious blood*. To this 1 Cor. vi. 19, 1 Pet. i. 19, he was verily *fore-ordained* before the ^{20.} foundation of the world, though not manifest till these last times. This does not only signify that the happiness we have in him, was then contriv'd, but the means of bringing it about were then appointed, and that was the precious blood of the Son of God, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot ; so that it may be said of all his troubles, they are the birth of an eternal purpose, the decree brought forth.

The disciples knew how to consider the design of God, and the malignity of men, without any jumble or confusion : They work together, and yet are greatly distinct ; things are call'd by their proper names. Here's the rage Acts iv. 25, of the Heathen, the vain imaginations ^{26, 27, 28.}

of the people, the kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gather'd together against the Lord, and against his Christ. *Herod* and *Pontius Pilate*, the *Gentiles*, with the people of *Israel*, of a truth, had gather'd together against the holy Child Jesus; but it was to do what God's own *hand and counsel had determined before to be done*. He was not the author of their sin, though they were the tools of his pleasure: We read here, that the *determination* is attributed both to his *hand* and his *counsel*; as if it was not a dead scheme, a thing laid for a peradventure, what *may* happen, or may not; but the decree was quicken'd, full of life, and would certainly, after the leisure of many ages, produce what it contriv'd.

You will suppose that this includes the concurrence of both parties; and it lets us see, that whatever is done, is the effect of a plan that God has *purposed in himself*: For when the world was framing, and the Redeemer, who was daily his delight, rejoiced always before him, even then he is said to *rejoice in the habitable parts of the earth*, and have his delights among the sons of men; and the argument we have of his delight in them, is the way he took to shew it; *The good shepherd gives his life for the sheep*.

Prov. viii. 30,
31.

John x. 11.

2. The

2. The sufferings of Christ were foretold in the very dawn of the love and kindness of God our Saviour towards man: He acted upon our recovery, as he did upon the creation. When *Adam* and *Eve* had fallen, the human nature was *without form and void, and darkness lay upon the face of the deep*: Till he brake silence with that great voice, *Let there be light*; he was pleased to visit them, as they sate in the region and shadow of death; there he *brought life* ^{2 Tim. i. 10.} *and immortality* to its first light, and that was the morning of our gospel. They were then assured that the serpent should be *bruised* in the head, crush'd ^{Gen. iii. 15.} and mash'd in pieces; that is, in the gospel-style, *The prince of this world* ^{John xvi. 11.} *shall be judged*: But the way of doing it, is making the conqueror *the seed of the woman*, and suffering the enemy to *bruise his heel*. That these expressions denote the human nature of Christ, and his troubles in it, is above all dispute; so that,

The first doctrine reveal'd to *Adam* was a *redemption through the blood of* ^{Col. i. 14.} *Jesus*: That he should be *made of a* ^{Gal. iv. 4.} *woman*, to be made *under the law*; and ^{Chap. iii. 10} being under the law, was *under the curse*. This is the current article, the thing most in view quite through the Old and

Heb. ii. 14.

New Testament. That he verily should be partaker of flesh and blood, as all the children were, that, *through death*, he might subdue him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. We may extend the apostle's observation, and take it in a wider circumference; as he says, The scripture foreseeing that God would *justify the Heathen through faith*, preached before the gospel unto *Abraham*, saying, In thee shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. The truth is the same, after you have stretched it out as it was designed; that as the *justification* of sinners should be through a *faith* in Jesus, even a faith *in his blood*, God preached before the gospel to *Adam* and *Eve*, saying, In her seed all the families of the earth should be blessed.

Gal. iii. 8.

Heb. xi. 4.

It was by faith in this that *Abel* offer'd to God *a more excellent sacrifice* than *Cain*, *ωλείονα θυσίαν*, something that was more a sacrifice, that better agreed to the nature and design of it. As it was managed in a way of slaughter, it had respect to him, who is call'd, *The Lamb slain, from the foundation of the world*. By this he obtained witness that he was righteous; not by this faith, but by this *sacrifice*; for though the grammatical construction agrees to either of them, yet I rather choose this inter-

interpretation, because there is particular notice taken, that God testified of *his gifts*.

They all knew here was *a hope* set before them, that God was gracious in the remission of sins; and they look'd to the great atonement, as *the reason of the hope* that was in them. So early did God *set him forth*, ~~we~~ fore-ordain'd him to be a propitiation for our sins, *through faith in his blood*. The apostle says no other thing than *Moses*, in the law and the *prophets*, did write; nay, the very same that *Adam, Abel, Enoch*, and all they who *walked with God*, believed and owned in their generations; that his own Son should be delivered up for us all: 'Twas a doctrine that open'd to them with the very eye-lids of the morning. This has its place among *the first principles of the oracles of God*; and in this sense we may truly say, Christianity is as old as the creation.

3. These sufferings of Christ were figured out in the whole frame of that devotion, which God appointed among his people. Their religion before the flood had the light of revelation to guide it. As they *offer'd by faith*, as they *walked before God*, it proved them to be reconciled: for how should two walk together except they are agreed? Their

sacrifices in so many forms were an argument how much they believed ; that *without the shedding of blood* there could be no remission ; and this must carry their thoughts to him, who was to redeem us *in the body of his flesh through death.*

Heb. ix. 22.

Rom. iv. 11.

1 Cor. v. 7.

Psal. li. ult.

Eph. v. 2.

Acts xxvi. 7.

But these rules came to be more digested and multiplied, when he took the seed of *Abraham* into covenant with him : He gave them circumcision, as a seal of the *righteousness of that faith*, which they had. When they were uncircumcised, they built their *altars*, as so many types of that altar that sanctifies every gift. They had their paschal *Lamb*, as a pledge of Christ our Passover, who is sacrificed for us. There was the blood of bulls and goats, whole burnt-offerings, their incense and perfumes all thrown into the same devotions, in hopes of him who has given *himself for us*, a sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour. They instantly served God day and night ; they did it, *ἐν συνέλεια*, with a fervency, an intenseness, and a rest of thought upon *the great hope of Israel.*

Now to what purpose should God lead a peculiar people to devotions that required a large expence of time and cost, but only to put them in mind of him, who is a High Priest of good things

Heb. ix. 11,
12.

things to come ; and who, *by his own blood*, should enter into the holiest of all, having obtained eternal redemption for us ; so that Judaism was only Christianity in figures, and shadows of good things to come.

4. I must add to this head, that which still gives more light and force to the argument, that these shadows are discharged and *abolished* upon the death of Christ. This proves, that as we are never to have them at all ; so the *Jews* had them, not for the sake of the things themselves, but the Holy Ghost signified, that *the way into the holiest of all* Heb. ix. 8. *was not yet made manifest* : For had there Chap. x. 2. been any virtue in them, they would not have ceased to be offered : But the New Testament speaks often with contempt, as the Old one did with veneration. They are called *weak and beggarly elements, carnal Ordinances* ; and an Gal. iv. 9. *obedience to them is being in bondage*. Heb. x. 10.

What's the reason that the service of Rom. ix. 3. God, which was once a glory, would be now a shame ? The apostle has plainly told us, that *what was made* 2 Cor. iii. 10. *glorious has no glory*, by reason of a glory that excels. The whole prediction of these typical duties is answered : They were but patterns of things in the heavens ; ours are *the heavenly things* Heb. ix. 23. *them-*

Col. ii. 17.
 Heb. x. 10,
 11, 12.

themselves. The body is Christ: He has done in *one offering* what they could only give us so many draughts of in a thousand. This proves there was a double end to be answer'd in the crucifixion of our Lord; first, to *accomplish* the service of the temple; and, secondly, to *abolish* it: And therefore, there is no more occasion to bring oftentimes the same sacrifices; for Christ has appear'd in the end of the world, to put away sin by the offering of himself. You may plainly see, the blood of their slain beasts was shed without the gate, and carried without the camp: This was afterwards brought within the vail, and upon the garments of the high-priest presented before the holiest of all. And thus is Christ gone, not with the blood of others, but *his own*; not into the holy places made with hands, but into heaven it self.

Heb. ix. 25,
 26.

Heb. xiii. 11.

Rom. ix. 5.

Matt. xxvii.

51.

Eph. ii. 13,

14.

They had it as their distinction from all other people, that as of them Christ was to come, so among them he was to be well known: But the vail is rent, and the middle wall of partition broke down; and he did this by dying: He *abolish'd in his flesh* the enmity, even the law of commandments contain'd in ordinances, of twain making one new man. This could never be done without his death:

death : For all the ceremonial law was in full force, till the seed came to whom the promise was made ; and the thing was over to which those figures had their allusion. Gal. ii. 19.

This proves that his humiliation, from the birth to the grave, from the manger to the cross, was all laid and contriv'd. The Son of man went, as it was written of him. 'Twas not a start of second causes, an event that bubbled out un-awares ; but foreseen, foretold, and fore-ordain'd. And though what he died for was not the righteousness of the law, yet it is a righteousness to which both the law and the prophets give witness. Matt. xxvi. 24. All their devotion was a shadow of good things to come ; and therefore could make nothing perfect, as the bringing in of a better hope did ; by which we now draw nigh unto God. You see, by these two particulars, that God ever brought up his people in the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sin, and in the knowledge of that remission by the blood of the cross ; because almost all things under the law are purged with blood ; Rom. iii. 22. and why did they so often meet with it, but to keep their faith alive in this great article of a satisfaction to his justice ? Heb. x. 1. Chap. vii. 18, 19. Chap. ix. 22.

5. 'Tis what the *prophets*, in their several ages gave a lineal witness to, prophecy was nothing but revelation retail'd and dealt out in parcels; holy men of God spake as they were mov'd, *φερόμενοι*, blown about and carried, directed and appointed, born and upheld by the Holy Ghost. What God at first declared with his own mouth, afterwards he distributed through earthen vessels, at sundry times, and in divers manners. And as the first and greatest thing that ever he had to tell mankind, was redeeming love, so the light he gave to every prophet was kindled at *that*. Whatever he said about their duties, their sins, their captivity, and deliverance, were so many lines stretching, pointing and centring here. As the apostle *Peter* tells us, that the prophets who enquired and searched into *our salvation*, spake of the grace that is come to us: 'Twas the spirit of Christ in them that testified the two main things, *the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow*; and it was reveal'd to them, that not to themselves but to us they did minister; they insisted upon things that are now *reported among us*.

Peter declared this to the *Jews*, at the time that he set himself to convince them of their sin: They had *deliver'd up*,
and

2 Pet. i. 20,
21.

Heb. i. 1.

1 Pet. i. 10,
11.

Acts iii. 13, 14.

and denied the holy and just one, and killed the prince of life ; but he would have them know, that *God delivered* him up too : For, says he, brethren, Acts iii. 17, through ignorance you did it ; but those ^{18.} things that God before had shown by the mouth of *all his prophets*, that Christ should suffer, he has so fulfilled : 'Tis a large compass that he takes in his affirmation, to make it the doctrine of *all the prophets* ; and yet you find he does not flinch from what he had said, but tells them over again, *that all* Ver. 24. the prophets from *Samuel*, and those that follow'd after, have foretold of these days.

David speaks concerning him, that Acts ii. 25. his soul was not left in hell ; which intimates that it was laid there ; that his sufferings were of such a nature as to be thus express'd. When our Lord open'd the scriptures to the disciples, who were going to *Emmaus*, he did it out of the law of *Moses* and the *pro-* Luke xxiv. 45, *phets*, and the book of *Psalms*, proving ^{46.} from all of them, that Christ *must needs* Acts xvii. 3. *have suffered*, and entered into his glory ; that it behov'd him, he could not do otherwise.

'Tis plain from the establish'd songs of *Zion*, that our praises are owing to *the Lamb that was slain*. He was to be Rev. 5. 9. poor

- Pfal. lxxix. 29. poor and needy before the Lord set him up on high. 'Twas by the mouth of
- Pfal. xl. 6. his servant *David* he said, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but *mine ear hast thou opened*; or, mine ear hast thou *bor'd*; that is, I am set out and marked to be thy servant for ever: I have got the perpetual badge. The equivalent to this phrase in the New
- Heb. x. 5, 6. Testament is, *a body hast thou prepared me*: And by matching the one of these to the other, we see that with *the fashion of a man* he took on him *the form of a servant*, preparing him a body,
- Phil. ii. 7, 8. was boring his ear, he had it on purpose to *learn obedience by the things that he suffer'd*.
- Heb. v. 7.
- Pfal. cx. 7. *David* also speaks of his drinking of the brook in the way. Our poetical translator makes no more of it, than that he should stoop to mean refreshments; which is, I think, a mean exposition, and carries but a mean refreshment in it to the faith of God's people: 'Tis plainly a local phrase; and relates to the sorrows in which he passed over the brook *Kidron*; the place that had been so bitter to *David*, when
- 2 Sam. xv. 23. he fled from *Abjalom*, and should be so to Christ, when he was falling into the hands of *Judas*.

Esaïas did not only see his *glory*, but John xii. 17. his *sufferings*, and spake of them; that in his humiliation he was taken away; Isa. liii. 3, 4. he was oppress'd and afflicted, brought 5, 6, 7, 8. as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before the shearers is dumb, he opened not his mouth: He was taken from prison and judgment; cut off out of the land of the living: *For the transgressions of my people was he stricken; my righteous servant shall justify many; FOR he shall bear their iniquities; he poured out his soul to death; he bare the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.*

Daniel tells us plainly, that the *Messiah* shall be cut off, but not for himself; that in the midst of the week he shall die. *Zechariah* speaks of the sword drawn against one who is God's fellow; the same thing that the apostle says; that being in the form of God, he became *obedient to death*. He is express upon this head, that they shall look on him whom they have pierced. And what shall I more say? the time would fail me, to speak of all those who have been preachers of the righteousness that is by faith. It was in accomplishment of this design that one of the soldiers run a spear into his side, and forthwith there came out blood and water. Dan. ix. 26.
Zech. xiii. 7.
Phil. ii. 6, 7.
Zech. xii. 10.
John xix. 34.

6. 'Tis the thing that Christ himself was apprized of, and consented to. Heb. x. 7, 8, *Lo, I come*, saith he, in the volume of the book it is written of me : The apostle has a great remark upon the connexion of these words ; That above, when he had said, Sacrifice and burnt-offering for sin, thou wouldst not ; *then said he*, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God ; he takes away the first that he may establish the second, *i. e.* the first appointment of sacrifice and burnt offering, that he may establish the second, his own designation to the slaughter ; and by this will we are sanctified, *through the offering of the body of Jesus, once for all* : As if this was the main will of God, the thing that he insisted on, and to which our blessed Saviour paid his homage at last ; when he said, not my will but thine be done. He became incarnate that he might become obedient, as will appear from the next head.

7. The human nature of Christ was prepar'd and dispos'd for these sufferings : His whole life was cast into such a mould of providence, that from the beginning to the end, he was to be despised and rejected of men. As David knew, that of the fruit of his loyns, God would raise up Christ to sit on his throne, so we should think the son of Da-
vid

Isai. liii. 2.

Acts ii. 30.

David would array himself with glory and majesty, and cast abroad his eyes upon every one that is proud, and abase him ; but instead of that, he seems to have no relation to *David's* throne, but rather to *all his afflictions* ; a reproach to his acquaintance, and a shaking of the head ^{1,} to all the people.

He conversed with places where they gave him no respect ; he chose to live as a prophet, *without honour*, in his own country. He came from *Nazareth*, out of which no good thing was ever supposed to come. He lived in *Galilee*, out of which there arose no prophet : Both his town and his country were of no repute. He asks water to drink of a *Samaritan* woman, which any *Jew* besides himself would have thought a dishonour. He was so hungry, as to seek fruit on a fig-tree upon the road, and to go empty away ; as if he had laid out for shame and grief, and determined, quite thro' his life, to make himself of no reputation.

He had our nature in all the tender sensations : Reproach had broken his heart, by the contradiction of sinners against himself : He was sorrowful and fore vexed ; his body was too weak to bear the cross ; he falls under it, fainting in the day of adversity, to show that

Isai. liii. 4i

his strength was small. He had nature in all its feeling ; every power that was able to receive a torment, all the capacities of misery. Crucifixion might deaden the other two by degrees ; the more they spent, the less they felt : But he died, as it were, in full life ; and the moment he gave out a *loud voice*, he gave up *his Spirit* too ; so that, it is evident, he was made to be stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted : Not a softening article in all the case, but the very dregs of wrath. There was no sorrow like to his sorrow.

Luke iv. 29.

8. He stav'd off his troubles till the appointed time came. Though I do not give you this as a full argument, yet you will easily see it opens the way to it : He had it always in his power to controul or escape the whole wrath of man.

John vii. 45,
46.

When they took him to the brow of the hill, on which the city was built, with a design to throw him down headlong, though he was upon the brink of ruin, he comes quietly away. When the officers went to take him, he tied their hands with what he said ; and they who were to be rulers of his Person, were captives to his speeches. When his enemies had work'd themselves and the people into a common rage, he did by that storm as he did by others ; he said,

Peace,

Peace, be still, and it ceased in a moment. When great multitudes went out to take him, no man laid hands on him, be- John viii. 20
cause his hour was not yet come.

The amount of these examples is what he tells us; That no man can take Chap. x. 18
away my life from me; I have power to lay it down, and power to take it again. And to this you may add, his assurance of help from above, if ever he desired it: But he gives it as the reason of his being so resign'd, because it was to a divine appointment. Thus he argues with *Peter*; Thinkest thou that I cannot pray to the Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that *thus it must be*?

9. These sufferings are what he went out to meet: He thought it his duty to do so. When he speaks of his being betray'd, forsaken, condemn'd, and crucified; says he, that the world may know I love the Father; *As the Father* John xiv. 31.
gave me commandment, so I do; arise, and let us go hence: 'Tis under this controul that he prays and cries; Father, let this hour pass from me; nevertheless, *for this cause came I to this* Chap. xii. 27.
hour; that is, "There is nothing in
" this hour which I so dread, but what

Of Christ's Sufferings.

“ ought to be there. ’Tis the enemies
 “ hour and the power of darkness, a
 “ day of darkness and gloominess, of
 “ clouds and thick darkness.” The sun
 shrunk in, as if nature it self would do
 nothing to hinder the whole *power of*
darkness. Yet in all this he only went
 as it was written of him ; nor was there
 any thing that could be surprizing to
 him, either unseen or unchosen. He sub-
 mitted to it all. His last action was to
bow the head, that he might die in the
 posture of a willing Servant.

10. There is to be an eternal memo-
 rial of these things in heaven, which
 shews the design was *laid* in the *place*,
 where it shall be ever *admired*. The
 offence of the cross is ceased to them
 above : They are no more ashamed of
 it, than they are enemies to it, but
 weave it into all their praises. When
 Rev. i. 5, 6. they speak of *Jesus*, as the faithful Wit-
 ness, the Prince of the kings of the
 earth, you may say, Holy and reverend
 is his name ; but they don’t forget that
 he is the *first begotten from the dead* ;
 and from that title there gushes out an
 adoration ; to him that lov’d us, and
washed us from our sins in his own blood,
 be glory and dominion for ever.

Thus the happy throng that are about
 him, from every part of the grand circle,
 give

give in their praises ; Thou wast slain, and hast *redeemed us to God by* Rev. v. 9. *thy blood*, out of every kindred and tongue, and people and nation : Nay, the angels themselves, those morning-stars, sing at our redemption, as they did at our creation ; Worthy is *the* Ver. 11, 12. *Lamb that was slain*, to receive honour, power, strength, salvation, glory, and blessing.





S E R M O N III.



ROM. viii. 32.

*He spared not his own Son,
but delivered him up for
us all:*



THE last thing to be consider'd in these words, is the *great end* upon which our Saviour became *obedient* Phil. ii. 6. *to death*, even the death of the cross, and that by the appointment of the Father. *Why* did not God spare his own Son, but deliver him up? What design had he in a scheme so full of wonder, and so full of horror? What means the heat of this great anger? Now the text I am upon

abounds with light as well as comfort;
it was FOR US ALL.

There is no cloud upon the sentence :
'Tis not to be number'd among the
2 Pet. iii. 16. things that are hard to be understood ;
and therefore why should any endeavour
to pervert the words of peace and truth,
which contain in 'em so much of a good
Luke ii. 14. will towards men ? because there is
nothing got by it. To deny the satisfac-
tion that Christ has made, is a rob-
bery upon God, and a murder to his
Rom. v. 2. people : 'Tis destroying the grace where-
in we stand.

That I am a sinner, is so true, that
there is no pretence to doubt it ; that
by this, God is angry is a matter be-
yond all dispute ; that without his fa-
vour I can have no hope of escaping the
wrath to come, is very certain : Now it
is not to be supposed that he will be
gracious to me with any injury to him-
self ; but if I am saved, as it will be to
the glory of his mercy, so there must
be no dishonour upon any other attri-
bute : Therefore some way or other he
1 John i. 9. must be *faithful and just* to forgive us
Isai. xlii. 21. our sins : He will be *well pleased for his*
righteousness sake ; he will magnify the
law, and make it honourable : It is not
Rom. iii. 25. enough that there is the forbearance of
God in the remission of sins that are
past ;

past; but *he declares his righteousness*; he declares, I say, *at this time*, ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ, in the moment of pardon, his righteousness, that he may be *just*, and the justifier of him that believes in Jesus.

And if this is to be the case, there is but one of these two ways for it, either by relaxing the punishment, and erasing out what is threaten'd, or by insisting upon it, and executing the fierceness of his wrath. The former of these is so very unglorious to him, that it cannot be admitted without a suspicion of weakness. Men are oftentimes obliged to acts of grace, to reverse a sentence, and dismiss a criminal; and it is not so much an argument of their goodness, as of their imperfection. They could not, in the making of their laws, foresee the necessity there would be of dropping them; and, in many cases, it is more their interest to release an offender, than it is to destroy him. They pardon because they cannot help it, and drop the terrors that they dare not execute; and so their laws are often repeal'd or dispens'd with, and the penalties they declare are no more than the blast of a terrible one, a mere storm against a wall. Isai. xxv. 4.

But all these shuffling ways are dishonourable to him, who *is the Rock*, and *his work is perfect*; a God of truth, and without iniquity, *just* and right is he. If his law is what he will not execute, to what purpose did he give it? Either he foreknew the sentence would be discharged, or he did not. To say he did not, but that several things happen in the course of life that he could not foresee, is to deny that his understanding is infinite; for if he is the Father of lights, he must be without any variableness or shadow of turning.

Deut. xxxii. 4.

Psal. cxlvii. 5.

James i. 17.

And then if he really knew that there was a threatening added that would never be accomplished, why should so rash a word come out of his mouth? that be far from the Judge of all the earth to trifle with his creatures; or to make the terrible things that he says in righteousness, a great noise about nothing. The Lord is righteous, both in giving the command, and in taking vengeance: 'Tis ever true of our God, and ever glorious to him, that he will by no means clear the guilty.

Gen. xviii.

25.

Psal. lxxv. 5.

Exod. xxxiv.

7.

Now if there is a satisfaction to be made, upon the ground of which we are pardoned, it must be either by our selves, or by a surety; either *we* or *he* are to find out a ransom. If we can do it,

it, it must be only one of these two ways, either by our active or passive obedience. Our active obedience, though we were able to make it perfect, is no more than it ought to be: It may reach to the *demands* of the law, but not to the *breaches* of it. Doing a present work, is no discharge to a former debt: Duty can never be an atonement for sin. He that offends *in one point*, is guilty of James ii. 10. all: And if a person does not continue *in all things* that are written in the book Gal. iii. 10. of the law, he is accursed. A single failure in a single article lays him under a condemnation.

To say that he accepts of what we ought to *do*, as an equivalent to what we ought to *suffer*, is to make void the Rom. iii. 30. law, and God forbid we should do so; for if my duty is to answer all the ends of my punishment, it confounds the whole nature of actions: Nor can it be a rational scheme without supposing that the punishment is quite abolish'd; and that amounts to no less than if we should say, that God's justice is an attribute to be totally neglected: That though all the rest of them should sit upon a throne of glory, yet this is cast out like the king of *Babylon*, as an abominable branch, Isai. xiv. 19. as a perfection no longer to be regarded. But this will never pass in heaven, where

2 the

the method of praise is already settled ;
 Rev. xv. 3. *Just and true are all thy ways, thou*
 Psal. xcvi. 6. *King of saints. The heavens shall declare*
his righteousness; he will always appear to
 be the holy and the just one. And as *the*
 Isai. liii. 6. *pleasure of the Lord* has prosper'd in the
 hand of Christ, so one head of that plea-
 Chap. xlii. 21. *sure is for his righteousness sake.*

So that, I take it for granted, our
 salvation is, some way or other, become
a righteous thing with God, what he
 does with a reputation to his equity.
 Rom. iii. 23. As we have sinned, and that sin is the
 I John iii. 4. transgression of the law, so the law is to
 be magnified when the sin is pardoned :
 That can never be by our *obedience* ; for
 whatever law it is that gives life, verily
 Gal. iii. 21. *righteousness* is to be by that law : It
 must then be by our *punishment* ; and
 there are but two ways of allowing
 this, which, I believe, will appear to
 be equally trifling.

If the punishment is compleat, there
 is no pardon for *us* ; if it is not, there
 is no satisfaction to *God*. As duty con-
 sists in all that the law commands, so
 vengeance comprehends all that the law
 has threaten'd.

To talk of God's accepting our im-
 perfect obedience instead of what he has
 requir'd, is to make *him* guilty of *break-*
ing the law as well as *we* : We do it by a
disobe-

disobedience, and he by a *dispensation*. And to say that he will receive an imperfect punishment, instead of what he has spoke of, makes the threatening no more than great swelling words of vanity, mere wind and bluster.

I can therefore, with all the use of my reason, see nothing but a heap of briars and thorns, a long train of entanglement, in denying the satisfaction of Christ; for I must suppose that God made a law, which afterwards he thought fit to drop; that he published a threatening without any design of an execution; and that had he foreseen the difficulty, he would never have done it; with all the knotty twisted perplexities that follow, that he is changeable, undetermined, *not of one mind*, but that Job xxiii. 13. any may turn him.

Or I must think, on the other hand, that he has treated the law as an institution, and his justice as an attribute; and that the reparation he has made to the one, and the honour he has given to the other, is by *the obedience of that* Rom. v. 19. *one Man*, through whom many are made righteous. No tittle of the law is to Matt. v. 18. fail, not a grain of the threatening to be lost. Had the execution fallen upon *us*, there could be no pardon, and therefore it must be upon *another*; and we are deli-

Job xxxiii.
24.

deliver'd from going down to the pit, *because he has found a ransom*. But I shall have room enough, within the verge of this text, to clear up the doctrine contained in it.

1 Cor. ii. 4.

I would observe, that it is all *Revelation* from first to last. The things that we meet with here, are not what man's wisdom teaches. 'Tis above the light of nature, and either the invention or the capacity of reason; *that* can neither contrive nor receive it. The day-

Luke i. 78.

spring by which we have the discovery came from on high. Every part of the proposition is the pure *mystery of God*, which comes from the opening of the temple in heaven.

Rev. xi.

First, 'Tis one of those things that we could never have known, that there was such a Person as God's *own Son*. Supposing that nature and reason could have work'd it out by a laborious argument, that there is an eternal power and Godhead; that it is he who gathers the wind in his fists, and binds up the waters in a garment; yet what is his name, and *what is his Son's name?* if thou can'st tell! That there was one

Rom. i. 20.

Prov. xxx. 4.

always *with him, daily his delight*, the brightness of his glory, the only begotten of the Father. These are titles that this world would never have heard

Prov. viii. 30.

Heb. i. 3.

John i. 18.

of, if they were not revealed from another.

Secondly, 'Tis no less amazing, when we read of his own Son, that instead of being told on earth what is always seen in heaven, that he lies in the bosom of the Father, it should be said, *He did not spare him*. The account given us of a Son, is no other than what agrees to an enemy, a rebel, a son that causeth shame : That he who is the Prince of life in nature, should be subject to death by providence. O the depth of the riches of God ! How unsearchable are his judgments ! Acts iii. 15.
Rom. xi. 33.

Thirdly, 'Tis still farther out of our depth, that one hated by his nation, envied by his rivals, deserted by his friends, betray'd by men, and insulted by devils, should have this whole calamity devolved upon him by *a divine appointment* ; that the Father of mercies, instead of protecting him from the wickedness of the age, should *deliver him up* to it. Here are counsels and decrees, predictions and figures, orders and resolutions, that thus it must be : 'Tis not possible that the cup should pass from him, but the will of the Lord shall be done : And as we are encompassed on every side with his marvellous works,

works, the last is of a piece with all the rest ; that is,

Fourthly, That this should be *for us*. His sufferings are consider'd as ours, in order to which our guilt is regarded as if it was his : *He made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be the righteousness of God in him.* If men object against this part of the doctrine, they had as good do it against all the other. And, indeed, there are two things that may be observed in the whole scheme of revelation.

1st. That quite through the projected way, there is a pure and perpetual tribute of glory to God : He does it all that he alone may have the praise. For this reason, the Son is the Person, his death is the price, a divine decree is the establishment, and a divine imputation the effect. We have no share in finding the surety, or bearing the burden, or fixing the appointment, or giving the pardon. God is all and in all : And as he did it in no other *view* than of his own glory, so it shall have no other *event*. He did it by himself ; he did it for himself. We are to *the praise* of the glory of his grace, wherein he has made us accepted in the beloved.

2dly.

2dly. There is nothing can be more opposite to the nature of man. His first iniquity was a falling off from God, and his present corruption is only that apostasy continued; a sliding back by a perpetual back-sliding. They would be *as gods*, and nothing can be more against the grain, than to tell them, that if ever they are saved, it must be *as creatures*; for which reason you see all the powers of nature in an uproar, not only against the law of God, but against his gospel.

The apostle has ranged the principles of infidelity in order: They begin with an opposition to the Person who comes to save us; they trample under foot *the Son of God*; denying his Deity when they dare, and concealing it when they dare not; sometimes making it a falshood, sometimes a figure, and sometimes an impertinence: And as they are in the way of rebelling, they go on to count *the blood of the covenant an unholy, or common thing*; as if it was not enough to take away his Deity, unless, at the same time, they profaned his sacrifice: And, lastly, that the notion may run into practice, *They do despite to the Spirit of grace*.

In what I have already consider'd, the text gives us plain matter of fact.

1. That he who came to save us is *the Son of God*; that is, one equal to the Father in nature: But, to wave all that, and give a little scope to our argument, he was certainly equal in holiness: He did no sin, neither was guile in his mouth: He was *harmless* in his actions, *undefiled* in his Person; and yet,

2. That he had all the miseries that were ever endured, by shame and trouble; a terror of soul, and a torment of body, and that without any allay; as if he must wring out the very dregs of wrath, and have the last drop of the cup of trembling: There was no sorrow like to his sorrow. Very often in judgment God remembers mercy; but here he had *forgotten to be gracious*, and to his own Son had shut up his tender mercies: He was so far from sparing him *from* his agonies, that he did not spare him *in* them; his mercy was clean gone.

3. This was not a short and sudden thing; he does not use him as we should have expected he would have done, to a dear Son, a pleasant Child, in *speaking against him* for a moment; but he is *deliver'd up* in a decree that was slow, and big and pain'd to bring forth.

Now

Now if the best person is to have the worst lot, and that by a righteous appointment, what was it for? The question brings us into a narrow compass; we are enclos'd; here is a wall on either side, there is no turning to the right^{Numb. xxii. 26.} hand, or to the left. We cannot say any thing against the *fact*, and therefore what can we say about the *cause*? If the answer of the apostle will not be taken, I don't see but we must go without one. If it is not *for us all*, it is impossible to say what it is for. Let us therefore oblige those whose notions make them enemies to the cross of Christ, and suppose there was no salvation of a chosen people to be obtain'd this way. Let our imaginations do as the dove did, when it flew out of *Noah's* Gen. viii. 9. ark, rove, and soar, and wander about, and try if there is any rest for the sole of the foot, besides what the Holy Spirit has given us.

I. Will any say that God punishes in *an arbitrary way*, that he^{Lam. iii. 33.} afflicts willingly, and grieves the children of men? That when these miseries came rolling upon Christ, he had no regard to sin at all? That he will destroy^{Job ix. 23.} the perfect and the wicked, and laughs at the trial of the innocent? This, I hope, *we* shall not dare to do, nor *they*

with whom we differ, because it is as contrary to their error, as it is to the truth it self. They give out themselves to be the advocates of the divine mercy, and put this compliment upon their scheme, that it proclaims the Lord to be gracious.

Jude 7.

Well, if so, he can take no pleasure in the misery of his creatures. This is saying worse of the gospel, than we can say of death and damnation: They in hell do know that the vengeance of eternal fire is for the punishment of sin; and that any one should endure what *they* do for nothing at all, that this should be the lot of him, who *knew no sin*, is as much against the honour of his goodness, as it is of his justice: For,

2 Cor. v. 21.

2. There will be no pretence that he has any iniquity of his own that made him liable to it. The prophet tells us, that when the Messiah is cut off, it is *not for himself*; and I am perswaded this is a point that no body will dispute with him. The *Jews* had really more excuse for *themselves*, than we can have for *providence*; if you do not comprehend in the death of Christ the sin of his people. They say to *Pilate*, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have deliver'd him to thee; Thus they thought,

Dan. ix. 26.

John xviii. 30.

thought, thus they believed; thro' ignorance they did it: But such a word as this could never come from the mouth of divine justice. God knew his innocence, it was impossible for him to mistake it; and therefore though he is made an offering for sin, it cannot be for his own. He declared him to be *a righteous Servant*, even when he appointed him to bear our iniquities. Acts iii. 17. Isai. liii. 11.

3. Was it needful that he should be thus used to *teach him obedience* by the things that he suffer'd? Many of the saints are destitute, afflicted, and tormented; and God throws them into that lot, for the trial and the lustre of their graces, that they may appear *true*, and may grow *perfect*. Thus when we hear of the patience of *Job*, we see *the end of the Lord*. That good man wanted to be made better; and, upon the whole, the Lord was *very pitiful, and of tender mercy*. He closed up the dispensation with a credit to himself, and with an improvement to his servant. Till the end of his troubles, he had only heard of God, by the hearing of the ear; but then his eye saw him, upon which he abhor'd himself, and repented in dust and ashes. Heb. v. 7. Chap. xi. 37. James v. 11. Job xlii. 3, 6.

But was there any thing of this *pity and tender mercy* in the death of Christ?

Did the Lord turn again his captivity? Did he *save him from death*? No, he not only left him *to* his enemies hands, but left him *in* them; he then forsook him. And,

Was there any occasion for Christ to *learn more* of God, to see him better than he had done? No surely. The Messiah was not cut off either for the punishment of his sin, or the improvement of his graces; and therefore his being thus deliver'd, was *for us all*; as God says, *For the transgression of my people was he stricken*. There are two things that I would observe here.

Isai. liii. 8.

1. The substitution of his Person; he was *given up* for us, to suffer what we should.

Gal. vi. 10.

Eph. iii. 15.

2. The extent of his design, that it is *for us ALL*; the household of faith, the whole family in earth and heaven.

Job xv. 2.

1. The words are as plain as any exposition can make them; he gave him up *for us all*. There is no eastern figure, or outlandish form of speech; no peculiarities or idioms, of which we are to fetch the sense from afar. We may understand the phrase without any vain knowledge, or filling our belly with the east-wind. That he *died* is certain, that it was *not for himself*, is evident: To deny

deny that former, is to lie against all history ; to affirm the latter, is to blaspheme against all goodness. And therefore it is *for us* ; that is, for those who are ^{John vi. 37} his, whom the Father had given him, his children, his charge. It was either *for our sins*, that he bore the punishment that was due to us, or only *for our example*, that we might act as he did. They who are against the former, intrench themselves within the latter : I shall therefore give up my thoughts to these two things.

First, Shew you the force and wickedness of one interpretation. And,

Secondly, The necessity, clearness, and comfort of the other.

I. Let us see how far we are able to go with this exposition, that the death of Christ was *for our example only* ; that we may be taught of him to be so patient to men, so resigned to God, so loose from this world, and so pressing to another. That we are to learn of him, is true, and imitate his behaviour ; who when he was reviled, reviled not again ; ^{1 Pet. ii. 23} and when he suffer'd, threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously. The question is not, whether this is *a part* of his design in dying, but whether it is *all* ? Does

it include the whole counsel of God in that article? I conceive not; because,

(1.) If no more was meant by it, there was no occasion that *the Son of God* should have been the pattern, or so great an extremity of death the copy: A lower person, and more abated agonies, would have sufficiently answer'd the end; had he never came into the world at all, we should have been encompass'd about with a cloud of witnesses. My brethren, we might have taken *the prophets*, who have spoken to us in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. God has given us these lessons in abundance: The scripture is crowded with the trials of that faith, by which the elders have obtained a good report, and they that follow them may have a fair copy: So that to what purpose was all this waste! Why should God do a thing that might have been spared, without any damage or scantiness to the Bible?

(2.) I cannot think that he was an example *in the sufferings themselves*, whatever he is in his behaviour under them. I am sure to call him so, is the most dreadful doctrine that ever was preach'd to his poor afflicted followers. That they may be used as he was is true, and that

that they ought to act as he did, in many cases, I own, but *not in all* of them. There are several important articles in his trouble, that never *can be* in ours, and we may say with comfort, they never *shall be*. As,

[1.] The necessity of a submission to the wrath of man. He, indeed, could have deliver'd himself from the unrighteous sentence, and he did not do it; but I deny that this is our duty. If I can resist an unlawful execution, I ought: If I had the strength of *Samson*, I am bound to use it against the oppression of the enemy. Christ is the only instance of passive obedience that ever was, or ever should be. He who made them fall backwards by a word, could John xviii. 6. have done the same with the arm of his power, the right hand that is full of Majesty: But thus it must be that the scriptures might be fulfilled. The only reason why the people of God did not wrest themselves out of the jaws of death, was because *they could not*; so that, in this particular, he is no example, nor has he obliged us to be *the servant of* Isai. xlix. 7. *rulers*.

[2.] His bearing the wrath of God, is an article of dying peculiar to himself: He is no example this way; it can never be said of any martyr, that he

Gal. iii. 13. he became *a curse*. God does not apply to any of them what the sentence of the
 Deut. xxi. 23. law has said of him, Cursed is the man that is hanged on a tree. 'Tis not guilt that made them die; there is no load of iniquity upon *them*, as there was upon *him*; they satisfy no law; they do not obtain by this execution any pardon for themselves, much less for others; and therefore,

[3.] The horror that lay upon his human soul at that time, is a thing in which he was so far from being our *Example*, that he is our *Deliverer*. They shall none of them go out of the world as he did, complaining that God had forsaken them: They are usually full of joy with the light of his countenance.

Matt. xxvii.
 46

And, by the way, this may give me an occasion to consider another end which the *Socinians* assign to the death of Christ, that it was in testimony to his cause and doctrine. To which I answer,

If you consider this abstracted from his resurrection, it is no dishonour to say, that there is scarce a martyr from whose death we may not see more reality in the Christian religion, than the world could do from that of Christ; for if you look upon things only by the
 out-

outward appearance ; his cross was enough to stumble all mankind. Well might they call it, *The offence of the cross*. To see a person go out of the world disclaim'd by men, disown'd by God, is amazing.

Had he gone off, as others do, in a chariot of fire, not loving their lives to the death ; had he cried out, as Stephen did, *I see the heavens opened*, and the glory of God, and Jesus sitting at the right hand of God, it might have still'd the enemy and the avenger : But to hear him crying out after a departed God, must rather affright those about him ; excepting in that one instance of his giving up the ghost with a full voice, by which he appeared to be the Prince and Proprietor of life. God forbid we should die as he did, either in darkness or in desolation ; angels standing off, the Father withdrawing himself ; under every torment upon his body, and every anguish upon his soul.

[4.] Such an exposition as this quite defeats the whole end of the apostle's argument in my text. He brings it in by way of support to what he had said, *If God be for us, who can be against us ?* that is, nothing can hurt us, though all the world should be against us : Now how does this appear ? because *having given*

given up his own Son for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things?

If Christ was only our example in dying, I am so far from concluding that God will give me *all things*, that I should rather fear he would give me *nothing*; for if he uses *me* as he used *him* in a dying hour, I shall have no comfort or evidence that he is *for me*, and the Case here mentioned, would rather be my horror than my hope. I shall never pray with regard to the *manner* of our Lord's sufferings; Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my latter end be like his. I never desire to tread the wine-press of the wrath of God; no, 'tis our privilege that Christ did *that alone*, and that of the people there was *none with him*; and of his people, there shall be *none after him*.

I therefore conclude, that we are, indeed, to know *the fellowship of his sufferings*, and be conformable to his death, and thus to be *crucified with Christ*, to be buried with him in baptism unto death; but yet when he was given up for us, it must be to another purpose; that is,

2. That he became a *Substitute*, in our room or stead. The first covenant said, In the day thou eatest thereof, thou

Numb. xxiii.
10.

Rev. xix. 15.
Isai. lxiii. 3.

Phil. iii. 10.

Gal. ii. 20.

Col. ii. 12.

Gen. ii. 16,
17.

thou shalt surely die : And accordingly Gen. iii. 24. there is an angel with a *flaming sword*, drawn out against *Adam* in person, if he dared to return. But in the new covenant *this sword* is awakened against Zech. xiii. 7. another ; not the flock, but the *Shepherd* ; not the man who was God's enemy, but the Man that was *his Fellow*, his Equal, and with whom he took the sweetest counsel. The chastisement of *our peace* was upon *him*, and by *his stripes* Isai. liii. 5. we are healed.

(1.) This is the plain and easy, the unforced and natural sense of the words : If they mean not this, they mean nothing. To darken a visible text, is talking in words without knowledge : Job xxxviii. 2. He that stands *for me*, stands in my place ; he that acts for me, acts in my stead : He *is* what I should *have been* ; he *does* what I should have done : He that is given or appointed for me, is but *where* I should be. To force a common sentence, is persecution ; 'tis drawing the gold of the sanctuary unto little threads and wires, and using a text as *Saul* did a disciple, compelling it to Acts xxvi. 11. blaspheme.

(2.) The doctrine of Christ's satisfaction is no single, scatter'd, independent article, but agrees to the whole stream of the bible : We have not this truth

as the small drop of a bucket, but as *the sound of many waters*: I will just read them to you, though in the whole discourse there has been a perpetual distribution of scriptures upon the argument.

'Tis this that we have the Bible for: It lies at the heart of all revelation; for
 Gen. iii. 15. as salvation was *the only thing* that God had to tell us, so the bruising of him, who is the seed of the woman, was *the only way*. This is the righteousness
 Rom. iii. 21. of God, that is *witnessed by the law and the prophets*. Ever since he made a path for the just; this is the light that shone upon it, till it came to a perfect day.

Whatever I have said upon this subject, has been with many quotations from the word of God: I will therefore only give you some, that I do not remember to have mentioned already, and that without any enlargement upon them; by which it must appear, that he who denies this doctrine, will have work enough upon his hands; he is to fight it out with all the Bible: Though they pretend to make a single text or two pass for no more than water spilt upon the ground; yet what will they do in the swelling of *Jordan*?

Jer. xii. 5.

Let any one judge what the death of Christ was for, who does but consider what *Esaias* says; Surely, he has born our griefs, and carried our sorrows. *All we like sheep had gone astray, but the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all. It pleased the Lord to bruise him, and put him to grief, and make his soul an offering for sin.* By his knowledge shall my righteous Servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities. He poured out his soul to death, he was numbered with transgressors; he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for transgressors.

Thus *Esaias* spake of him, and thus he spake of himself; The Son of man came to give his life a ransom for many. His apostles are witnesses of these things. God has commended his love towards us, in that whilst we were yet sinners, Christ died for us: When we were without strength, Christ died for the ungodly. God sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, by a sacrifice for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law may be fulfilled in us. Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. Christ has loved us, and given himself for us. There is one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ

Heb. ix. 12. Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all. By his own blood he enter'd into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. The blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered
 Ver. 14. himself without spot to God, shall purge your conscience. His own self bare
 1 Pet. ii. 24. our sins, in his own body on the tree, Chap. iii. 18. by whose stripes we are healed. He once suffered for our sins, the Just for the unjust, that he might bring us to
 1 John iv. 10. God. God has loved us, and sent his Son to be a Propitiation for our sins: But the time would fail me to give you all of them.

To this I may add, the whole course of the dispensation that we are under. 'Tis the voice of every ordinance. We are baptized with the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins; that is, as many of us as are baptized into Christ, are baptized into his death. We hereby
 Rom. vi. 3. declare our belief, that he was deliver'd
 Chap. iv. 25. for our offences, and rose again for our justification.

What is preaching the gospel but preaching the cross of Christ? 'Tis not only to tell a melancholy story, but to
 John iii. 14. lift up the Son of man, as the serpent
 Numb. xxi. 9. was lifted up in the wilderness, and say,
 John i. 29. Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world.

The Lord's Supper, in both its parts, is a frequent memorial of the doctrine; as often as we do it, 'tis *in remembrance* 1 Cor. xi. 24. of him. The bread shews his body that was *broken for us*, the cup is the New Testament *in his blood*; and therefore laying aside the imputation of his righteousness, is a sponge to the whole institution, and leaves us in all our worship to be walking in a vain shew.

Nor do I ever expect to see the Bible *defended* in the hands of those by whom it is thus *defeated*. 'Tis in vain to set out *Jesus*, unless it be as a *Propitiation* Rom. iii. 25; for our *sins through faith in his blood*; without this our preaching is in vain, and your faith in vain. To say that he did not bear our sins; is to make the Gal. v. 4; cross of Christ of none effect.

(3.) This alone can answer the cries of an awaken'd conscience. Where-Micah vi. 6, with shall I come before the Lord, and bow my self before the most high God? Not with thousands of *rams*; but with *the precious blood of Christ*, as of that 1 Pet. i. 19; one Lamb, who is without blemish and without spot: Not with ten thousand *rivers of oil*, but in and through him, whose name is as *ointment poured forth*, Cant. i. 3; and who offer'd himself as a *sacrifice of* Eph. v. 2. *a sweet smelling savour*; and it may be

John xii. 3. said of heaven it self, that the whole house is filled with the odour of the ointment. This speaks peace *for* us, and speaks peace *to* us. 'Tis the blood of Christ that *sprinkles* the mercy-seat above, and the *conscience* here below, that it may serve the living and true God.

'Tis not duties that will do it; for when a person is made to abhor himself, which is always the case in a thorough conviction, he will see there is no bringing a clean thing out of an unclean; that if our selves are *an unclean thing*, our righteousness is as *filthy rags*.

Job xiv. 4.

Isai. lxiv. 6.

To say that the doctrine of justification by Christ is an enemy to holiness, is one falshood; and to say that the opposite opinion does promote it, I am afraid, is another, if we may judge of the case by mens lives. But this we know to be true, that in all the floatings, heavings, and tossings of an uneasy conscience, the blood of Christ is our only hope, our only anchor, sure and stedfast.

(4.) The providence of God made this doctrine to be the glory of our *reformation*. 'Twas in a gradual opposition to the righteousness of Christ that

Popery

Popery began to live ; and in the noble revival of the truth it began to die. When they set up justification by works, their monks and masses, their penances and pilgrimages, their fasts and fopperies, their confessions and absolutions, their crosses and cringes, their tyranny and trumpery were the generation of vipers that issued from this womb : And therefore when God poured out a Spirit of reformation upon the land, 'twas not only in scowering the churches of imagery, and rumbling among their idols, but the ax was laid to the root of the tree ; Christ alone was exalted in that *Isai. ii. 17.* day, and the wicked one consumed away by the brightness of his coming ; *2 Thess. ii. 8.* then were *our priests clothed with righteousness, and all the saints shouted for* *Psal. cxxxii. 16.* joy.

And when this doctrine is denied, the Protestant cause is a going. There is the substance of Popery ; such people have got *the stump of Dagon*, they want only the palms of his hands to be set on again.

Go into *Poland*, as the *Jews* were order'd to *Shiloh*, and see what an angry *Jer. vii. 12.* God has done there for the iniquity of his people. *Socinianism* made a gap for Popery : Their *Racovian* vanities were

the *Roman* vehicle. Where-ever the righteousness of Christ goes out, the man of sin comes in. The *Arians*, who denied his Deity, prepared the way for *Mahomet*; and they who denied his satisfaction, made room for Antichrist. Thus, as they went a whoring from their God, they fell to the mother of harlots and abominations.

2. As he was deliver'd up for us, so remember it was for us *all*. Not the whole human race, as has been thorowly argued in this Lecture; but the word is to be taken in the same compass that our Saviour gives it, when he says to

John xvii. 10. the Father, *All mine* are thine, and *all thine* are mine. The meaning is, that,

(1.) The greatest believer will need it. The chiefest of all the apostles desires to
Phil. iii. 9. *be found in him, having on the righteousness that is of God by faith.* And,

(2.) The meanest shall have it. He
Isai. xl. 11. gathers *the lambs* in his arms. From
Rev. i. 5. hence he has his praises above; *To him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,* be glory and dominion. When we come to see the King in his beauty, and behold the land that is afar off, we shall find, indeed, the sword upon his thigh; but, however,
Rev. xix. 13. *his garment is dipt in blood.* 'Tis the doctrine

doctrine we now admire, and we shall hear it rung through the palace of the King. There will be a confluence of persons and praises from the whole compass of time, and the whole circle of nature; all of them together pouring in their eternal melody in those words.

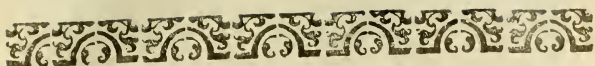
Thou art worthy, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred and tongue, and people and nation.



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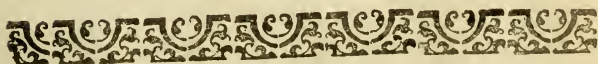




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S E R M O N I.

G A L. ii. 16.

Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ; that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

TH E S E words are like an alabaster box of precious ointment, which, if rightly opened, and applied, will, under the influences of the Spirit, fill every believer's soul with the perfume thereof. In them
the

the Spirit of truth, as he is Christ's glorifier, both lifts up a standard against errors of all sorts, in the doctrine of a sinner's justification before God; and holds out a lamp of gospel light, to direct awakened souls into the true way of gospel justification: For they tell us how the apostles and primitive saints were all of them justified, and that negatively; "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law." All taught of God in primitive times learned this great lesson, that man, in his low and lost estate, is not justified by the works of the law: What the law is, and what the works are, of which the apostle here speaks, is placed in the clearest light, by the twenty first verse of the following chapter; "For if there had been a law given, which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law^a;" which plainly intimates, that no such law was given in the apostle's days; and may we not be assured, that no such law has been given since? So that these words bar a sinner's being justified before God, by the works of any law whatever, whether old or new, moral or ceremonial, perfect or remedial.

Then follows another lesson, which all who were in Christ's school learn'd, in

^a Gal. iii. 21.

those early days ; without which the former would but have driven awakened sinners to despair, “ but by the faith of Jesus Christ,” that is, which has Christ for its object ; as is evident from what follows ; “ Even we have believed in Jesus Christ.” Awakened sinners, in that day, were not left to sink under their load of guilt at mount Sinai, but were directed to mount Zion, and brought to Christ, as he is revealed thereon ; for so it follows, “ Even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law :” Then is added a farther confirmation of the foregoing assertion ; “ For by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.”

In speaking therefore to this great scripture, so expressive of the faith and actings of primitive saints, I shall observe the following easy method.

I. I shall shew what it is for a guilty sinner to be justified before God, the Judge of all.

II. I shall enquire whence it is that any of Adam’s fallen posterity are justified.

III. I shall shew how it is that sinners are justified.

IV. I shall endeavour to guard you against errors of all sorts, relating to a sinner’s justification before God.

I. I shall shew what it is for a sinner to be justified before God ; where I shall briefly assign the difference between gospel justification, and gospel sanctification ; the blending of which together is a Popish error, very pernicious, and of fatal consequence, as it militates against the Protestant doctrine of imputed righteousness, and casts a very dark veil on some of the brightest parts of the apostle Paul's epistles ; and, which is worst of all, tends to eclipse the glory of Christ, as he is the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believes ; who is first made righteous, and so sanctification to us : “ Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made to us wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption ^b ;” which order of God relates to the application of salvation, and ought not to be inverted, nor broke in upon, by such as preach the gospel.

Gospel justification is a change of state and condition in the eye of the law, and of the law-giver ; whereas gospel sanctification is a blessed conformity of heart, and life to the law, or will of the law-giver. The first is a relative change, from being guilty to be righteous ; the other is a real

^b 1 Cor. i. 30.

change, from being filthy to be holy : By the one we are made near to God ; by the other we are made like to him. By being justified, of aliens we are made children ; by being sanctified, the enmity of the heart is slain, and the sinner made not only a faithful loyal subject, but a loving dutiful child. This may be set in the clearest light by the following simile : Our children, the day they are born, are as much our children as they are ever after ; but they are many years growing up into a state of manhood ; their likeness to us, as it respects the mind, as well as the body, is daily increasing : Thus a king's first born son is heir apparent to the crown, whilst lying in the cradle ; after-growth adds nothing to his title ; but it does to his fitness to govern, and to succeed his father. Our right to heaven comes not in at the door of our sanctification, but at that of our justification ; but our meetness for heaven does. By Christ's righteousness, it being upon us, we have a right to the inheritance ; and by Christ's image, it being drawn upon us, we have our meetness.

I shall next observe, that to be justified, is more than barely to be forgiven ; for to be entitled to, and brought to heaven, must be more than to be saved from hell : A man may be brought in not guilty at the
king's

king's bar, without being advanced in the king's court ; a prince may pardon a traitor, without conferring on him any further favours. God's justified ones, are not only forgiven, according to the riches of the Father's grace, but they are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, according to the largeness of the Father's heart. Christ, as the Lord our righteousness, has brought in such a way of knowing and of enjoying God, as the first Adam and his covenant were utter strangers to ; to wit, a seeing God face to face, in the presence chamber of heaven, and a being filled with God, even with all his fulness : God's justified ones are not barely to live, but to reign in life by Christ Jesus.

Now to prevent mistakes, as well as to clear up several texts of scripture, I would observe, that we read in scripture of a two-fold justification, neither of which is the justification I am to speak to. We read of a comparative justification ; “ The Lord said unto me, Backsliding Israel hath justified her self, more than treacherous Judah ^c.” Of this we also read ; “ I tell you, this man, that is, the Publican, went down to his house justified, rather than the other ^d.” We also read, in scripture, of a

^c Jer. iii. 11.

^d Luke xviii. 14.

declarative justification ; “ By thy words thou shalt be justified ; and by thy words thou shalt be condemned : ” The saints all of them speak the language, not of Ashdod, but of Canaan, and by so doing they evidence themselves to be of the number of God’s justified ones ; whereas Christless sinners speak the language not of heaven, but of hell. Of this declarative justification the apostle James speaks, in the second chapter of his epistle ; who, in this view, may easily be reconciled with the apostle Paul. The charge of sin brought against us by the law of God ; and that of being hypocrites, of which the saints are falsely accused by the men of the world, are two different charges : By good works the believer vindicates himself from the latter, as the apostle James did ; but it is not by any works of righteousness that the saint, though an apostle, hath done, or can do, that he is freed from the former. For a guilty sinner to be justified before God, the Judge of all, is more than to be either comparatively or declaratively justified ; which is the justification I am to treat of.

In doing which, I shall not consider it as it is an immanent act in God : God’s immanent acts are surrounded with light in-

accessible, and full of glory ; and are as far, nay, infinitely farther, out of the reach of our minds, than the highest star in heaven is beyond the reach of our arms. As he must be a man, and not an inferior being, who knows what the immanent acts in man are, or how things lie in his mind and will ; and he must be an angel who knows what the immanent acts of an angel are ; so he must be God, who knows what the immanent acts in God are, or how things lie in the divine mind and will. Thus God himself speaks of them : “ My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, says the Lord ; for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts^f.” It must therefore be safest in this, and in all other gospel doctrines, to soar no higher, than the wing of the word will carry us.

In the word, we read of a court held by God, as a Judge, in Paradise ; before whom our first parents were audibly cited, tried according to truth, and condemned in righteousness. God also held a court on mount Sinai ; the sight whereof was so terrible, that Moses, though a typical mediator, quaked and trembled, as did the mount on which it was held. But he

^f *Isai. lv. 8, 9.*

now holds his court on mount Zion; where it is proclaimed, as on the house top, "That by Christ all who believe are justified, from all things, from which there was no being justified by the law of Moses^s:" That we are freely justified by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus; that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believes; and that we are made the righteousness of God in him: "He has made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him^h;" which last is the amazing account we have in scripture of a sinner's justification before God; which, to be sure, is the wonder of angels, that man fallen so low in the first Adam, should be raised so high in Christ the second; that they who are hell-deserving dust and ashes in themselves, should be made the righteousness of God in another.

So that for a sinner to be justified before God, is not, properly speaking, for him to have the effects and fruits of Christ's purchase imparted; for so they are in a sinner's regeneration: But to have that righteousness of his, which is made up of his active and passive suretyship obedience to the law of God, as a covenant,

^s Acts xiii. 39.

^h Rom. x. 4.

imputed ; by which he not only fulfilled the law, but magnified it, so as to make it infinitely honourable, as well as repaired the breaches thereof : This righteousness was wrought out for us, long before we had a being, but it is not to, nor upon us, in the sense of the scripture, till we believe. To talk as some have done, and still do, that the effects of this righteousness are imputed, is to speak very improperly, as well as unscripturally ; these are imparted, but it is the righteousness itself that is imputed : How else could it be said, as it is in scripture, that believers are made the righteousness of God, in Christ ; and that in Christ we have all righteousness for our justification ? The last of which is the language of the Old Testament, as the first is of the New.

In the ruin brought upon us by the first Adam, not only the dismal fruits and effects of his fall are imparted, but the guilt of his first sin is imputed ; he being our federal head, by the same divine appointment that he was our common parent ; as is evident, beyond all contradiction, from that great textⁱ ; “ Therefore as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation ; even so, by the righteousness of One, the free gift came

ⁱ Rom. v. 18.

upon all men to justification of life; for as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous." Let the apostle Paul, who was once a Pharisee, determine whether Christ's righteousness be not imputed, as well as its purchased grace imparted; "That I may be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law; but that which is through the faith of Christ, even the righteousness which is of God by faith^k." Thus much may suffice for the first general head.

II. I shall very briefly shew whence is it that any of Adam's fallen posterity are justified. Had our first parents continued stedfast in God's covenant, their justification would have been owing to a righteousness of their own, wrought out by their own care and industry; but our justification, who are sinners, and as such are fallen infinitely short of the glory of God, must be owing to another spring; even the free, abounding, superabounding grace of God. Adam's justification would have been according to the dues of creation; whereas our justification is every way consider'd above the dues thereof; being

^k Phil. iii. 9.

Of Justification.

wholly of grace, and not of works. This, and no other, is the account which the scriptures give of it; "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus¹:" In which words are joined what the Arians and Arminians say can never meet; even a being freely justified by grace, and a full price laid down to obtain it: But the seeming contradiction vanishes, by considering, that the price was neither sought, nor brought by us; but is only and wholly the provision and gift of grace; which gift is so contrived, as to manifest the grace of God to the uttermost: It is that grace may shine forth the brighter, and not be eclipsed, that this way of justification was pitched upon; for Christ the Redeemer was, throughout the whole of his suretyship, undertakings, and performances, to the praise of the glory of the Father's grace. Never did grace so triumph, as in the provision and gift of Christ. Every step the Redeemer took in this great work, was most expressive, as of the love of his heart, so of the grace of the Father's; which hereby is so fully and gloriously manifested, as to be said to reign, through Christ's righteousness, to eternal life. "Moreover, the law enter'd, that the offence

¹ Rom. iii. 24.

might abound; but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound; that as sin has reigned to death, so grace might reign, through righteousness, to eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord ^m;” of the reign of which there shall be no end: Our shoutings will be grace, grace, not only when we first come to heaven, but ever after; which will be enlarged rather than straiten’d, and strengthen’d rather than grow low and weak, throughout the endless ages of eternity. As they about the throne rest not, so they cease not thus to give glory; of which reign, how small is the portion which the most knowing among us at present know? We write and preach, and think and talk, but like so many children about it; which is the apostle’s own comparison, though he had been wrapt up into the third heaven. As no words could express to the queen of Sheba the glory of Solomon’s kingdom, so less able are words to express the glory of the reign of grace; the superaboundings of which will fill an eternity, as a spring tide doth our rivers, and employ all heads, hearts, and tongues about the throne; when our likeness to our glorified Head, the Lord Jesus Christ, shall be compleat. Thus much may suffice for the second enquiry.

^m Rom. v. 20.

III. I shall shew how it is that sinners are justified. The light of nature may know something relating to the justification of a man, in a state of innocency, on the foot of a covenant of works; but it knows nothing how it is that sinners are justified on the foot of a covenant of grace; this is such a secret, as was hid from men, and from angels: To the Bible alone we owe the discovery of this rich mine of gospel treasure; in digging into which, I shall observe the following method.

1. I shall shew, out of scripture, what part in this weighty affair is assigned to God the Father.

2. I shall shew what part is assigned to the Lord Jesus Christ.

3. I shall shew what part is assigned to the ever-blessed Spirit.

4. I shall shew what is the use of faith, in a sinner's justification; where I shall answer a threefold enquiry.

(1.) Whether faith be only a manifestation.

(2.) Whether the believer may, in any sense, be said to be justified before faith.

(3.) How it is that elect infants, dying in infancy, are justified.

5. I shall evince the sure connexion which there is between faith and actual justification.

6. I shall assign to good works their proper place, in this weighty affair.

7. I shall shew of what use the law, the written word, and the court of conscience are therein.

1. I shall shew what part in this great affair God the Father takes to himself, according to the scriptures. He there speaks of himself as being Judge of all ; and of consequence he must have a principal hand therein. Accordingly we read, that it is God who justifies ; “ Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect ? It is God that justifies ” :” To whom all who believe in Jesus come to be justified ; “ and to God the Judge of all °.” He who passed sentence upon sinning Adam, with all he represented, as a federal head, and should ever spring from him, as a common parent, of whose holy and perfect law all sin is the transgression ; He it is that justifies, or no flesh could be truly, or to any saving purpose, justified.

That this great and solemn transaction may appear to be the pleasure of the Lord, being effected not only with a salvo to his truth and holiness, but in a way most expressive of all the divine perfections, whereby the Father may get to himself, in point of manifestation, a glo-

ⁿ Rom. viii. 33.

^o Heb. xii. 23.

rious name for ever, the wonderful platform of a sinner's justification, with all that leads to it, or is contained in it, or is consequential upon it, is spoke of, in scripture, as his contrivance, and there represented not only as the birth, but as the master-piece of his adorable wisdom; "Wherein he hath abounded towards us, in all wisdom and prudence: So that the sinner's justifying righteousness, is the provision and gift of his love and grace; and he who brought in or wrought out this righteousness, the Lord Jesus Christ, is his righteous Servant: "Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified^p," saith the Father to Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ finished transgression, and made an end of sin, and reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness, under a double character; the one subordinate to the other; as God's righteous servant, and by God's appointment, his peoples righteous Surety; who came into this world, as sent by the Father, and set about this great work, as one compleatly fitted for it, and fully authorised to accomplish it by the Father. Of both these you read at large in the sixty first chapter of Isaiah; "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because

the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings ¹," &c. "Christ glorified not himself to be made an High Priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee ²." Neither did he act in his own name in the discharge of that office; "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not;" whose Father was always with him, as Man and Mediator. He both assisted and accepted him, throughout the whole of his obedience, whether active or passive, and was with him in his private life, as well as in his publick shewing to Israel: He was not alone in the cradle, nor in his reputed father's house, any more than at Jerusalem, or in the temple; who was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, whereby he was actually and publickly justified, not barely from the false accusations of his enemies, but as his people's Surety and great Representative, from all those sins he had undertook to satisfy for. He told his disciples, that the Spirit should convince the world of righteousness, because he went to the Father; for had he not fulfilled all righteousness, instead of being received up into glory, he had been sent back to finish the work which the Father gave him to do.

¹ Isai. lvi. 1.

² Heb. v. 5.

The Father's part, therefore, in this weighty affair, is to provide for his people a justifying righteousness, in all respects, perfect and compleat, such as his law, the great standard of all righteousness, requires : And as to provide it for them, so to impute it to them, which is done by him, as Judge of all, not audibly by a voice from heaven, but by a more sure word of prophecy, as out of the mouth of two matchless witnesses, the Old and the New Testament. God's written word as really answers to the records of heaven, as the counterpart doth to the original deed ; for as the law is a perfect copy of God's will, so the gospel is as perfect a copy of God's heart : Saints and sinners may depend upon it, that what the word of God now says they are, Christ, as Judge, will declare them to be. We are not one thing in the eye of the word, and another thing in the eye of Christ ; who will own and honour his written word, as all along, so at last. As certainly as that declares Christ's righteousness to be upon us who believe, it is so, according to eternal purposes, to all those ends of love and grace, for which it was contrived and provided by the Father.

None, save God, the Judge of all, could make Christ to be sin for us ; and none, save God, the Judge of all, can make any
of

of us the righteousness of God in him ; Both which are ascribed to him ; “ All things are of God ; who has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation ; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses to them ; for he has made him to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him^f ;” which blessed exchange must be the wonder of angels, and will be for ever the wonder of all the saints.

The provision, revelation, and imputation of this righteousness, is wholly and solely of grace, in the superaboundings thereof ; therefore is it once and again called the gift of righteousness, which is its New Testament name ; such a gift as has an abundance of grace going along with it, “ Much more they who receive an abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one Jesus Christ[†].” To conceive of God, as of a just God, and not as a Saviour, borders upon despair ; and to conceive of him as of a Saviour, and not as a just God, borders upon presumption ; but to conceive of him, as being a just God, and a Saviour, is to form right and becoming

^f 2 Cor. v. 18.[†] Rom. v. 17.

thoughts of him, such as both Testaments furnish us with : For thus God speaks of himself ; “ There is no God else beside me, a just God, and a Saviour .” And therefore thus should we think of him ; his being a just God should but the more endear him, as he is the provider of righteousness ; and his being a Saviour, should but the more encourage us to plead this righteousness with, and before him, as Judge of all. In a word, as the whole of our salvation, by the Lord Jesus Christ, is of grace, (“ By grace are ye saved ;”) so is this main branch thereof, a sinner’s justification before God.

I shall conclude this discourse by endeavouring to return an answer to the following enquiry ; which contains the greatest difficulty that can be raised against the head of doctrine I am upon ; which lies at the bottom of every sinner’s heart, in objecting against the being of a God, and the truth of the gospel in general, as well as this of a sinner’s justification before God in particular. The objection is this : Why was sin suffered to enter this world, which hath hurl’d such confusion quite round the globe ; to finish which, in a way of satisfaction, cost God so dear, as the blood of his own and only begotten Son ? To which

I answer; “ God made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions ^w :” The first sin was, to be sure, the genuine birth of free will. Now to ask, why God made man a free agent, and suffer’d him to act suitably to his nature, that is, freely, would be a vain and a foolish enquiry. We may safely conclude, that had not God known how to deal with such an enemy as sin, so as to bring glory to himself, and good to the chosen people, out of all the confusion with which sin hath filled this world ; he would never have suffer’d it to have enter’d : But the same super-creation grace which prevented the fall of the elect angels, would have interposed, and prevented the fall of the elect among the children of men ; so that the gospel is a full answer to this bold enquiry : According to which, God is commending his love in the gift of his Son ; may we not safely say, so as it could no other way be so sweetly and fully, so surprizingly and gloriously recommended : “ But God commends his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us *.” He also, who is an infinitely wise and holy God, takes occasion, from the aboundings of sin, to manifest the superaboundings of his grace ; “ Moreover, the law enter’d

^w Eccl. xvii. 29.^{*} Rom. v. 8.

that the offence might abound ; but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound ; that as sin has reigned to death, so might grace reign to eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord ^y." In the gospel we have a new display of all the divine perfections ; according to which, God, who is love, is not content to manifest his love in a direct way, as it was manifested towards the elect angels, and, without any more to do, fix us in glory, but has pitch'd upon such ways of manifesting his love, as contain in them fathomless depths, unmeasurable heights and incomprehensible breadths and lengths : For the love in God's heart being infinite, must be as great as all transient acts can express for ever ; not only such as are plain and obvious, but such as are in the deep waters, and take the most astonishing compass and turns.

To create such a free agent as man, has nothing in it unbecoming an infinitely perfect being, who was made in the image of God, and placed at the head of this lower creation, as lord thereof. Whatever became a bountiful Creator to bestow on man, was, with a very liberal hand, given to our first parents : Nothing that could be called a creation-due was withheld from them ; but, as creatures, they were

^y Rom. v. 20.

mutable ; and, as rational, they were free. To enter into covenant with our first parents, who were made but a little lower than the angels, and crowned with so much glory and honour, was but a farther honour put upon them ; neither does this carry or contain in it any thing unbecoming the Majesty of God. To suffer them to act suitably to the natural powers, and to the state of probation they were placed in, that is, freely, though at this door sin might enter, and did, yet this contains in it nothing that is unbecoming ; neither does his restraining and over-ruling so great and deadly an evil as sin, for the manifestation of his own glory, in bringing light out of sins horrible darkness, and order out of all the confusion sin is big with, and hath, since the fall, brought into this world. These things are expressive of power, and not of weakness, of adorable wisdom, and not of folly : Thus the apostle speaks of them, especially of the latter, God's concluding, or shutting up all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all ; and thus should we : " God has concluded all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all : O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past find-

finding out ²!" This shutting up of all in unbelief, must include every chosen vessel, both among the Jews and among the Gentiles; for the pronoun "Them," is not in the original.

The following simile, which I owe to the great Dr. Goodwin, may serve to illustrate what I have delivered on this head. Suppose a curious artist, who hath made the finest and the best vessel of glass that was ever made, should let it fall out of his hand, and break all in pieces, with a design to shew his greater skill in so setting together the broken pieces thereof, as to make it more beautiful, and useful, and stronger than ever; even so strong as to be out of all danger of being ever broke; would any censure his conduct, or say he had acted a weak unbecoming part, in letting the glass he had made, with so much care and art, fall and break? Would not all commend the act, and admire his skill? For though to make glass is confessed, by all, to be a curious art; yet to be able so to set together broken glass, as to render it proof against all accidents, the hammer it self not excepted, would be a far greater piece of skill. The application is easy, and very teaching; though the

² Rom. xi. 32.

simile falls short in this, that man broke and destroy'd himself; "O Israel, thou hast destroy'd thy self; but in me is thy help *." For God to make so noble a creature as man; endowed, as, to be sure, he originally was, with such noble powers, and vast capacities, was much; but to new form him, after sin had marr'd, and broke him; as he shall be form'd by Christ, as to body, as well as soul, in the morning of the resurrection, is much more. The saints will not then complain of God, nor be tempted to charge him foolishly, for suffering sin to enter: And as for the Atheist and the Deist, they will then be struck dumb, and for ever silenced. The restitution of all things by Christ, the second Adam, will set all that relates to, or is consequential upon the sin and fall of the first Adam, in the clearest and most astonishing light.

There are two New Testament texts, as full of glory, as any in the whole book of God, which I would turn to, and direct how they may with safety be received, and feasted upon, and should be so by the whole household of faith: The first of them is this; "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ; both which are

* Hosea xiii. 9.

in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him ^y.” The other is this ; “ And having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself ; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven ^z.” Now to carry these texts beyond the election of the Father’s grace, is to abuse them ; but to understand them of the full birth of electing and redeeming love, is to make a right use of them : And of that other which is like to them ; “ Whom the heaven must receive, till the times of the restitution of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets, since the world began ^a.” Neither man, the inhabitant, nor this earth, on which he dwells, are what they originally were, or as they at first came out of the hand of God ; but both are what they became through sin, like the shreds of a broken vessel. Man is a child of darkness ; a slave to sin and Satan ; a wolf to his neighbour ; a rebel to his God, and the destroyer of himself : And as for the earth on which man walks and dwells, sin has turn’d it into an howling wilderness ; its atmosphere is fill’d with irregular winds, hurricanes, and storms ; with noxious vapours, blasts and lightnings ; with terrible thunder, and

^y Eph. i. 10.^z Col. i. 20.^a Acts iii. 21.

sometimes with prodigies and frightful sights: The earth is so far from being alike fruitful, that in it are sandy deserts, and barren heaths, hard rocks, and flaming mountains. Its fields bring forth thorns, and briars, and weeds in an abundance; there is the nettle, and the hemlock, with other poisonous plants, and hurtful fruits; its insects are many of them armed with stings, and some full of deadly poison: There is the viper and the scorpion; its birds and beasts are many of them birds and beasts of prey: And as for men, how many are the defective, as well as monstrous births among them? Thousands are blind, and deaf, and crooked from the womb; and thousands are strangled in the birth: All are born mortal; and how many die soon after they are born? They just salute the world, and so take leave of it; all which things are the fruits of the curse, and undeniable instances and proofs of God's hatred of sin, and of his holy displeasure against sinners.

But, after all that can be said on this head, to silence gainsayers, that wise and most comprehensive saying of Christ, occasioned by the gospel's being hid from the wise and prudent of the world, and revealed unto babes, should satisfy all true believers: "Even so Father, for so it

seemed good in thy sight ^b." To his sovereign will and pleasure, who works all things after the counsel of his own will, it seemed good, for wise and holy ends, to suffer the fall of our first parents, and, by them, sin to enter; and to his sovereign grace it seems good, thus wonderfully to over-rule it, as to the whole election of his grace. All which lessens not the evil that is in sin; no more than the skill of a physician, in prescribing a sovereign antidote, lessens the malignity that is in poison; nor is it any ways the least excuse for sinners, who transgress the law with hearts full of enmity against the gospel. Might natural men quite round the globe have their wills, Christ would be in heaven alone. To quarrel with electing love, as it is manifested in the gospel, and with him, that justifies such as believe in Jesus, is to quarrel with the best and the only effectual way of drawing us out of the pit, and bringing us safe to glory. How empty would the story of Joseph have been, had he not been envied, and sold by his brethren, with all that was consequential thereupon? whereas it is now one of the most remarkable and surprizing that was ever wrote. How sweet did Israel's bondage in Egypt, make Israel's rest in Canaan? and how astonish-

^b Luke x. 21.

ing and full of God was their deliverance? God's sovereign will and pleasure is, in many instances, the *ne plus ultra* of the believers enquiries: No other, nor better reason can be given, why the world is not as many millions of years old, as it is thousands; and why the globe of this earth is not as large as the body of the sun; and why the numbers of the elect are not double or triple to what they are, who, consider'd in the first fruits, and in the full vintage, will be an innumerable multitude. He, who works all things after the counsel of his own will, is in these things accountable to none; neither to men, nor to angels: None may say to God, what dost thou? whose own glory, in the manifestation of it, must, beyond all dispute, be his highest end: A consideration which should not only quiet, but rejoice all who believe unto righteousness; who cannot desire more than is entail'd on them, in that single, but great text: "Let none glory in man, for all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; you are Christ's, and Christ is God's^b." Can the great soul of man, when enobled and enlarged by regenerating grace, open its mouth wider, or desire more? Let us

^b 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22.

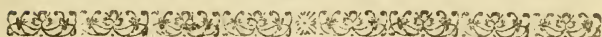
therefore, who are among God's justified ones, join in giving thanks with those of whom the apostle speaks; "All things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might, through the thanksgivings of many, redound to the glory of God^c." In so high and comprehensive a sense does praise wait for God in Zion; whose inhabitants are encouraged to praise God, by being told, as from the mouth of God, "Whoso offers praise, glorifies me." They therefore whom God justifies, should not, upon every slight occasion, or new trouble, hang their harps upon the willows, but rather look up, to have them new tuned, by a fresh anointing.

^c 2 Cor. iv. 15.





S E R M O N II.



GAL. ii. 16.

Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ; that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

IT is a sweet word, and full of encouragement to us Protestants, to suffer for the truth, as well as to defend it; “Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath; for the heavens shall
I 4 vanish

vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old, like a garment; and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner; but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished ^a." Let the batteries raised by hell, and by Rome, against the Protestant doctrine of a sinner's justification before God, be never so many, and be never so artfully planted, and boldly discharged, they shall not be able finally to prevail against it. He, who waved his right of being in heaven as soon as he was incarnate, and, in that sense, left heaven to fulfil all righteousness, will not suffer such a jewel to be stole out of his mediatorial crown, as is his suretyship righteousness.

2. I shall proceed to shew what part is, in scripture, assigned unto the Lord Jesus Christ, in the business of a sinner's justification before God; where I beg leave to premise, for the preventing of mistakes, which some are ready to run into, and for the clearing of several texts of scripture, which the Arians are very fond of, that in many places of scripture, especially in the New Testament, where Christ speaks of himself, and is spoke of; it is spoke of him either as Son of man, or as sustaining the character, and discharging the office of a Mediator. Thus is that scripture to be un-

^a Isai. li. 6.

derstood, in which Christ tells his disciples, that the Father is greater than he; and that other, with many more, where Christ assures us, that the Son can do nothing of himself; and thus I shall all along consider him. This lessens not the necessity, nor the truth of Christ's being truly God, as well as man, but presupposes it; for as in nature a human body, suppose it had life and motion, without a human soul, would be fit for no post of service, neither in church, nor in state; so Christ's human nature alone, though the first creature, and the noblest of all creatures, without his divine, would no ways be fit to sustain the character, nor to discharge the office of Mediator. If we suppose a chrystal globe to be never so large and clear, would it, of it self, have in it any light or heat; but if we could suppose it filled with the body of the sun, how would it glow and shine? He, in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, which is affirm'd in scripture of the Lord Jesus Christ; for it is said, "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily^b;" must out-shine in glory, and out-do in usefulness, all mere creatures, though there were never so many worlds of them, and be infinitely fit and capable to be Head of the church, and Sa-

^b Col. ii. 9.

viour of the body: Nothing can be too difficult for him to effect, nor too great for him to accomplish; be it to finish transgression, in a way of satisfaction, or to bring in everlasting righteousness. Let us conceive, if we can, of any more fit to quicken the dead in sins, and to raise the dead in nature; to govern the world, and to judge it; to bring off more than conquerors and safe to glory, such as belong to the whole election of the Father's grace, or to make all things new, than he is, in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. This being premised, Christ's part in the business of a sinner's justification before God, according to the scripture, is to bring in a justifying righteousness for the whole election of the Father's grace. He, as the Surety of a better covenant, was called of God, and freely undertook to pay his people's debts, both that of satisfaction to the law, as a broken covenant, and that of service to the law, as a covenant of works. He was accordingly made of a woman, and made under the law; "When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law^c;" that is, under its preceptive part, as a covenant, as well as its penalty, as a broken cove-

^c Gal. iv. 4.

nant; its preceptive part, as a covenant, being its principal part; to enforce which, all penalties, even among men, are added to their laws: As a covenant, the first Adam transgressed it; and therefore it became Christ, the second Adam, thus to fulfil it. God's perfect law was, to be sure, in the utmost perfection thereof, wrote on Christ's heart and nature, and so expressed throughout the whole of his life: "Thy law is within my heart^d." He did more and better work for God, that is, work of greater worth and consequence in the short space of thirty odd years, than the first Adam would, or could have done, had he continued steadfast in God's covenant to this day. Christ was fulfilling all righteousness, whilst lying in the cradle; which, doubtless, was part of his humiliation: of whom, whilst an infant, it may be said, that the first Adam, at the head of this lower creation, was but as his menial servant, being the figure of him, who was to come, "who is the figure of him that was to come^e." Christ, the second Adam, was fulfilling all righteousness, throughout the whole of his private life; for this also was part of his humiliation. Suppose the natural sun should be took out of the heavens, and be so lessen'd

^d Psal. xl. 8.^e Rom. v. 14.

and darken'd, as to be hid for a time in one of the caverns of this earth, to bring about any of his adorable purposes, who made it; would not this surprize and fill with wonder all the inhabitants of the globe? I may safely say, that the obscure and private life of Christ, the Son of righteousness, was fuller of wonder. He went on fulfilling all righteousness, active, as well as passive, at Jerusalem, and every where else; till he bowed on the cross his high and holy head, saying, "It is finished." Christ's suretyship righteousness may well be called, for it really is, a robe of supercreation righteousness, being, in all respects, beyond and above the dues of creation; which no creature, neither men nor angels, could so much as ever have thought of, and much less have expected at his hand, who was their Creator, how liberal soever in other respects he had been towards them. This robe lay hid in the uppermost and most secret recesses of God's ward-robe, or rather heart, being wholly of supercreation grace: Though Adam had, in a sense, the moon under his feet, he could not thus challenge a being cloath'd with the sun, which was not then risen in his horizon; though the first Adam's world was made by Christ, and he was Christ's figure, yet he knew it not. This excellent and excelling piece of knowledge was
reserv'd

reserv'd for gospel times; which so enobles the dispensation we are under, that it is called the kingdom of God, and of heaven. Christ's suretyship righteousness may be also called, for it really is, a robe of superangelick righteousness; which as far excels and out-shines the righteousness of all the elect angels, as the shine of the sun, in its meridian strength, does that of the new moon; for would it not be blasphemy to call theirs, as Christ's is called, the righteousness of God? or to say that they are made the righteousness of God, in their own, as we are said to be made in Christ's righteousness? God no where calls their righteousness, as he does Christ's, my righteousness; "I bring near my righteousness^f." Christ's suretyship righteousness may be also called, for it really is, a superparadiscal righteousness. Had our first parents continued stedfast in God's covenant, their robe of justifying righteousness had been compleat; but not of like worth with this, the merit, as well as the atoning virtue of which is infinite. What is the richest livery of a lackey, if compared with the royal robes of a king? Nothing done by the figure of him that was to come, can be compared with what was done by Christ,

^f *Isai. xlv. 13.*

the substance, whose suretyship righteousness has in it to an overflowing, all the endearing, recommending properties, which that of a Saviour can have, to recommend it to sinners. As,

(1.) It is a sin-finiſhing righteousness; ſo it is called in the Old Teſtament; “To finiſh tranſgreſſion^s ;” and it is abundantly declared ſo to be in the New. To finiſh the ſins but of one, even the leaſt of ſinners in a way of ſatisfaction, would have render’d bankrupt and beggar’d the arch-angel, not to ſay all the angels in heaven ; whereas Chriſt, as Surety of a better teſtament, has, in a way moſt expreſſive of all the divine perfections, finiſhed the numberleſs ſins of the many thouſands of God’s elect; who were choſe not only with Chriſt, as an elder brother, but in him as an Head. The ſcripture ſays, God has choſen us in him^h,” not to prevent our fall; for that would have obviated his other character of being our Saviour ; for “he is Head of the church, and Saviour of the bodyⁱ ;” but to deliver us out of the pit; by bringing us off more than conquerors, and fixing us in glory beyond all danger, or ſo much as a poſſibility of loſing the manſions allotted

^s Dan. ix. 24.
v. 23.

^h Ephes. i. 4.

ⁱ Chap.

us in his Father's house, where we are to be for ever with the Lord; "So shall we be ever with the Lord ^k."

(2.) Being a sin-finiſhing, it muſt of conſequence be a juſtice-ſatisfying righteouſneſs: For all the demands of God's vindictive juſtice upon us, and the whole of its controverſy with us, are founded on ſin; this would have no more a controverſy with the elect, among the children of men, were they not finners, than it has with the elect angels. I might have added; it is not barely a juſtice-ſatisfying, but a juſtice-declaring righteouſneſs; "To declare his righteouſneſs, that he might be juſt ^l." The flames of hell, or all the penal ſufferings of men, and of devils in the bottomleſs pit, are not ſo full a declaration of God's vindictive juſtice, as were the ſuretyſhip ſufferings of Chriſt, the Lamb ſlain; the awaking of God's ſword againſt the man that was his fellow, is a nonſuch inſtance of God's vindictive juſtice.

(3.) It is a law anſwering, or rather magnifying righteouſneſs. Thus it is ſpoke of by the prophet: "The Lord is well pleaſed for his righteouſneſs ſake; he will magnify the law, and make it honourable ^m."

^k 1 Theſſ. iv. 17.
2li. 21.

^l Rom. iii. 26.

^m Iſai.

Sin being the transgression of the law, pours the utmost contempt, both upon it, and upon God, the Law-giver; and was it as powerful, as it is exceeding sinful, it would for ever cancel the one, and dethrone the other; the sinner's wish would be every sinner's attempt, that there might be no God. Now the law on which our first parents, in eating the forbidden fruit, pour'd such contempt, and on which like contempt is poured by all their numerous offspring, in their several generations; Christ, as the Fulfiller of all righteousness, not only fulfilled, to every jot or tittle, but by so doing, because of the dignity of his Person, so magnified it, as it could have been no other way, that we can conceive of, magnified. This righteousness therefore of his, though it is manifested without the law, from mount Zion, and not from mount Sinai; yet it is witnessed to by the law, as well as by the prophets; "Now the righteousness of God, without the law, is manifested; being witnessed to by the law, and by the prophets."ⁿ From all which it follows, that,

(4.) Christ's suretyship righteousness is not only a God-appeasing, but a God-delighting righteousness: For is not the whole of our salvation, obtained thereby,

ⁿ Rom. iii. 21.

expresly call'd the pleasure of the Lord: " the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. ° " Never was the Father better pleased, for never was he more glorified, by any righteousness, than he was by Christ's; who was rais'd from the dead, as God's righteous servant; and his peoples righteous surety; not by a single attribute, such as the power of God, or by the goodness, and tender mercy of our God; but by the glory of the Father. " Christ was raised up from the dead, by the glory of the Father, ^p " this is a full proof that he was an offering, and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling favour.

Thus we see, what part is allotted in scripture to the Lord Jesus Christ, in the business of a sinner's justification before God. His province was to finish transgression in a way not of bribery, nor of composition, but most expressive of the glory of all the divine perfections; that is, in a way of real and full satisfaction; and so to make an end of sin, as in the time and season thereof, to put an everlasting end to sinning; for as the chosen people shall sorrow no more, so they shall sin no more for ever, when in glory; and such reconciliation for iniquity, that the once offended majesty of heaven may not

° Isa. liii. 10.

^p Rom. vi. 4.

only settle his abode with, and among the chosen people, as being his rest; not desiring to be any further glorified than he is in them, and by them; and will be so for ever; but may rejoice over them, with singing. “The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing:”^a And to bring in for them such an everlasting righteousness, as will outlast the lasting hills, and the canopy of heaven it self; in which the saints will outshine angels, and be brought to be next to the throne; the merit of which is given forth in the blessings of grace here; and in those of glory hereafter; and can no more be lessen’d, than Christ’s mediatory fulness can be exhausted: from which the gospel receives its name, being call’d the ministration of righteousness, “much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory;”^r and in which all who believe come up with an everlasting acceptance, with and before God the judge of all.

Christ, as the Lord our righteousness, fills both testaments with his glory; for thus consider’d he is the sum of the old testament promises, and prophecies; and the substance of old testament types,

^a Zeph. iii. 17.

^r 2 Cor. iii. 9.

and figures ; and thus consider'd he is the treasure hid in the field of the new. Paul's heart and life were not fuller of his pharisaic performances, before conversion, than they were of Christ, as the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believes after conversion : His lip and pen, tho' once the lip and pen of a blasphemer, sounded the trumpet of the gospel louder and sweeter, and with greater success than any before, or since his day. This was a fuller confirmation of the truth of the doctrines of the gospel, and of this of imputed righteousness, than it wou'd be, should the Mufti turn christian ; or the Pope become a protestant ; and so both preachers of this righteousness, which Christ wears as head of the church, and surety of the better covenant, upon the throne ; as well as all the saints shine in it about the throne.

3. My next undertaking is to say something concerning the work of the ever blessed Spirit in this great and weighty affair ; a sinner's justification before God. His office according to the scriptures, is to apply purchased salvation ; and of consequence, to bring near this righteousness. " I bring near my righteousness, " faith God, speaking of this robe, and gift of righteousness ; which he doth not only doctri-

^c Isa. xlv. 13.

nally by his word; but internally, and powerfully by his own Spirit: who is no more a created being, or the spirit of a creature, than the power of God is a created power, or the power of a creature. Thus in all probability it was brought near to our first parents: We can hardly think that so great a preacher as God, should beat the air, and speak only to the ear, without speaking to the heart of the first Adam; who was to hand down the gospel to, and to teach his children the fear of the Lord. He also brought it near to two of Adam's sons, to Abel, and to Seth; and to how many more of his children we know not: He also brought it near to the Antediluvian fathers; particularly to Noah; who was a preacher thereof. God by his Spirit call'd Abraham out of a land of graven images; and gave him by an eye of faith to see at such a distance of time Christ's day, as he was the finisher of sin, and fulfiller of all righteousness: By the same searcher of the deep things of God it was brought near to Moses; and to all the chosen people under the old testament; and to those unlikely instruments, the first founders of the gospel dispensation under the new; who, tho' illiterate fishermen, were so taught of God to spread the net of the gospel; that one of them caught, that is converted, three thousand souls at once. Who, save the Spirit

Spirit of life and power could of a persecuting blaspheming Pharisee, make such an unwearied zealous preacher of Christ's righteousness, as the apostle Paul was? this righteousness is brought near, doctrinally, to all who hear the gospel; or have the bible; but powerfully, and savingly, only to such as believe.

Now if any are so curious as to enquire, why such a righteousness has not all along been carried both doctrinally, and savingly to all mankind: I answer; to every individual soul for whom it was design'd by the Father, and was wrought out by the Son, it hath all along, and shall to the end of time, be savingly reveal'd: And as for others, they have all along, in every place, where the gospel hath been preach'd, poured the utmost contempt upon it: So that to send it doctrinally, where God has not a chosen people, is to expose it. Now how few soever God's chosen people were before the flood, and were all along under the old testament; and still are under the new; under latter day glory, they will appear to be many, as the drops of dew; and as the sand upon the sea shore; especially if the thousand years of Satan's binding, and of the churches refreshment mention'd in the revelations, be a thousand of prophetic years; during which long space of time, elect sinners shall fly as a
K 3 cloud,

cloud, and flock unto Christ as doves to their windows. To be sure, the numbers of God's elect, when all of them shall be brought safe to happiness, will be such as shall be most for the manifestation of the glory of each divine person, and of all the divine perfections; a congregation too great for any man to number; even "ten thousand times ten thousand, which is ten thousand millions; and thousands of thousands; ^t" that is millions without number. In comparison with whom they in hell are drop'd, and no mention is made of them, where we read of the winding up of dispensations; "every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I, saying; blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the lamb for ever, and ever. ^u" So extensive, and so glorious will the reign of grace be in superabounding, where sin in such a numberless number of instances hath abounded: For if the persons pardoned cannot be numbred; much less can their sins be so, that are forgiven them.

To distinguish aright between the letter of both testaments, and the Spirit of

^t Rev. v. 11.

^u Rev. v. 13.

power, which accompanies the preaching of the gospel, as it is reveal'd in both testaments, and makes it become effectual, is of the utmost consequence: For tho' the letter of the gospel is suited to us, as we are rational creatures; yet such is the blindness of the sinners mind, thro' sin, and the hardness of his heart, that instead of giving life, it kills: Whereas the promised Spirit, who is a Spirit of light, life, and power, suits us, as we are dead in sins, and without strength. The Apostle thus distinguishes, and so should we. "Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life. ^w" By the letter of the word, God is drawing us with the cords of a man, which is his own phrase. "I drew them with cords of a man. ^x" To which cords I would refer all gospel calls, and invitations, exhortations, and dehortations; and those most solem protestations, that he delights not in the death of sinners. "Say to them, as I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: Turn you, turn you from your evil ways; for why will you die, O house of Israel? ^y" and

^w 2 Cor. iii. 6.

^x Hosea xi. 4.

^y Ezek. xxxiii. 11.

of the most condescending of entreaties ;
 “ As though God did beseech you by us,
 we pray you, in Christ stead, be ye reconciled to God ^z :” And those strong arguments ; “ Wherefore do you spend money for that which is not bread ? and your labour for that which satisfies not ? Hearken diligently to me, and eat you that which is good, and let your soul delight it self in fatness ^a .” As in scripture there is the language of creation-due, such as that to Cain, “ If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted ^b ?” so there is the language of the law, as a rule of walk ; which is the very first consideration of the moral law, which was wrote as a rule of duty on the hearts and consciences of our first parents, before God enter’d into covenant with them, of which the apostle speaks ; “ Who shew the work of the law, writ upon their hearts ^c .” There is also the language of the law, as a covenant of works ; which is, do this, and live ; “ Or, the man that does those things shall live in them ^d .” There is also the language of the law, as a broken covenant, which includes the thunders of Sinai, and tells us what sin is, and what it deserves, and is, according to the righteous judgment of God, due to sinners

^z 2 Cor. v. 20.
^c Rom. ii. 15.

^a Isai. lv. 3.
^d Chap. x. 5.

^b Gen. iv. 7.

for their sins ; how he might have appointed all to wrath, instead of appointing any to obtain salvation by Jesus Christ. Under this head is included the language due to free will, though fallen, of which the law takes no notice, to make any abatements. The greatest part of scripture language is that of Sinai, which is adapted to shew to sinners both their want of Christ, and his worth. This takes in the doctrinal part of scripture, with all its calls and invitations, its motives and encouragements, with all its absolute promises ; such as that great word of promise, which has all along been, and shall, to the end of time, be made good to the whole election of the Father's grace ; “ I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.” The full birth of which fruitful promise is reserved till the dawn of latter day glory ; when the fulness of the Gentiles shall come in, and all Israel be saved : At present, we see but the first fruits of electing love ; the full vintage will not be till the glory of the Lord, as it shines forth in the face, and in the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, shall be so revealed, that all flesh shall see it together. In the meanwhile, we, who preach the gospel, are to publish it in general terms, leaving it to

the Spirit, to make special application thereof to the chosen people. Thus Christ preached it; "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes on him should not perish, but have everlasting life ^f:" And so should we, of whose success in so doing we read; "The election has obtain'd it ^s:" And of their acceptance; "For we are to God a sweet favour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish ^h." We may safely conclude, that as the numbers of the elect are such as shall, in the end, be found to be most for the manifestation of his glory, who chose them, so is every circumstance relating to them; such as the time of their birth into this world, as well as the time of their being born again, and brought safe to glory.

The usual way of the Spirit, in bringing near Christ's righteousness to the hearts and consciences of God's elect, is to erect such a tribunal in the court of conscience, as all the business and pleasures of life cannot hush nor bribe; before which the most bold and daring of sinners, how careless and secure soever they may for many years have been, are secretly cited, and cannot help making their appearance;

^f John iii. 16.
ii. 15.

^s Rom. xi. 7.

^h 2 Cor.

where their past lives and actions are called over, and their very hearts and natures look'd into; and they are tried not only by the letter, but by the spirituality of the law, and found to be rebels in heart and life, and, as such, to be worthy of death, not only temporal, but eternal. Thus they, who once dreamed of nothing but ease and impunity, become self-condemned, and continue terrified, and in distress, till they are led by the word and Spirit to Christ, as the end of the law for righteousness, to every one who believes; in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sin, according to the riches of the Father's grace; by acting faith in whom, though it be but a faith of reliance; the storms raised in their consciences, by a sight and sense of sin, are stilled, and they are made thankful, as well as easy, and so fitted to run in the ways of God's commands. They, by the same Spirit that teaches them to lay aside the temper of the Pharisee, and not to work for life, either by way of merit or atonement, are enabled to work from life, and consequently to do more and better work for God, than all the children of men do besides: So that God's handful of corn, on the top of the mountains, is made to shake like Lebanon; and they of the city, that is, of Zion, are brought
to

to flourish, like the grass upon the earth.

Thus God, who was with Christ in bringing in this righteousness, teaches, by his word and Spirit, all the chosen people submission to it; who thankfully receive it, and, from the heart, rest upon and plead it, as their sole justifying righteousness with and before God, the Judge of all: By being made light in the Lord, they are brought to see both their want, and the worth of this righteousness; and, by being made a willing people, they are brought to cast anchor upon it. As the apostle did, so do they, from the day of their conversion, desire to be found in Christ, not having their own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Jesus Christ; even the righteousness which is of God by faith.

I shall conclude this discourse, by putting God's justified ones upon acting a kind becoming part towards all mankind, that is, pleading the promise of the Spirit for all flesh. This, in a way of eminency, is called the promise of the Father under the New Testament; "But wait for the promise of the Father, says Christⁱ;" as the promise of the Messiah was the promise of the Father, under the Old: And as Old

ⁱ Acts i. 4.

Testament saints pleaded day and night the one, so should New Testament saints be as instant and constant in pleading the other; for it is by making good this word of promise, that the man of sin is to be destroy'd; "Whom the Lord shall destroy by the Spirit of his mouth, and by the brightness of his coming^k." The fulness of the Gentiles is to be brought in, and all Israel is to be saved. They who are made the righteousness of God in their justification, and, in that sense, are cloath'd with the sun, should endeavour to be of as publick use and service, in a spiritual sense, as the sun is in a natural; whose light and influences are not restrained to any place, nor part of the globe, but reach and enlighten, at due seasons, as well as warm and cherish the whole earth. Thus should the prayers of New Testament saints, for the pourings forth of the Spirit, as he is Christ's glorifier, reach the Pagan parts of the world, that they may be brought to cast their idols to the moles, and to the bats: They should also reach the Mahometan parts of the world, that they may no longer be imposed upon by that false and filthy prophet Mahomet, but be brought thankfully to exchange the Alcoran for the Bible: Thus should they reach the Anti-

^k 2 Thess. ii, 8.

christian parts of the world, that seventy millions of souls, which Papists are computed to be, may no longer carry the mark of the beast in their foreheads, but be brought to hate the whore, and make her desolate: They should also reach God's ancient people the Jews, who, concerning the gospel, are enemies, for our sakes, because that was, by the express command of God, preached to the Gentiles; but, as touching the election, they are beloved, for the Father's sake; or as they once were a chosen people, and shall as certainly be called, as they are for a time rejected, whose call will be like life from the dead. Thus for believers to ply the throne, and to plead the promise of the Spirit, is to become publick blessings to mankind, greater blessings than most imagine. A saint thus plying the throne, in a cottage, may be, and is, of greater consequence than many a prince on the throne.

To encourage New Testament saints thus to plead this great promise, Christ spoke those sweet words; "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him¹?" Was it as natural for man to desire to be useful, as it is to

¹ Matt. vii. 11.

be famous in his generation, we who believe should give the God and Father of Christ no rest, till the Spirit, from on high, is poured forth upon all flesh. Believing parents cannot pray to greater, nor to better purpose, for those dear parts of themselves, their children, than to beg for them the Spirit, as he is Christ's glorifier; nor believing children for their respected parents. Thus should all the saints, pray for all in authority, and all godly magistrates, pray for all they rule: Thus should all gospel ministers beg him, for the churches committed to their care; and church members beg him for their pastors: Thus should godly relations and friends beg him for one another; even masters for their servants, and servants for their masters. Such prayers put up in faith, would not return to us empty, but soon bring down such a blessing upon us, and ours, as would turn our declining autumn, in a spiritual sense, into a promising spring. Would any gladly know the principal cause of those many grey hairs, in a spiritual sense, which, in town and country, are upon persons professing godliness, upon families and churches; I should return this short answer: The promise of the Spirit is not pleaded, as it ought to be, by us of the New Testament; neither do we desire and expect him, under his New Testament cha-

character, which is that of Christ's glorifier; "He shall glorify me," says Christ. Christ's glorifier, being our Teacher, Sanctifier, and Comforter, should encourage all the followers of the Lamb to wait and to watch for him, more than they who watch for the morning; and to look up as duly as the morning light appears, for a fresh anointing, to enable them, becomingly, like God's pardoned and justified ones, to perform the duties, to bear the burdens, and to resist the temptations of every day. This is the way to be filled with his comforts, and with his fruits; such as love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, with which the trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord should abound, that he may be glorified.





S E R M O N III.

*GAL. ii. 16.

G A L. ii. 16.

Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ; that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

TH E gospel is deservedly called the glorious gospel of the blessed God; “According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which is committed to my trust ^a.” For, according to it, such as believe are

^a 1 Tim. i. 11.

Of Justification.

made partakers of a divine nature, in their regeneration, are made the righteousness of God, in their justification, and bear the image of the heavenly Adam, as to their sanctification; they are one spirit with the Lord whilst on earth, and are to be for ever with him above in heaven. These are some of the principal parts of that great salvation, which is brought to light in the gospel: Whence it is plain, that Adam, at the head of a covenant of works, with this world under his feet, was no more than the morning star; the shine of which is very inconsiderable, if compared with Christ, the sun of righteousness. The first Adam, bright as he might be, in his first rising, soon set in dismal darkness, which has covered the earth ever since; whereas Christ, the second Adam, is so risen in the first promise, as never to set, but has filled both Testaments with his glory; and thus he rises, never to set in the hearts of all the saints, whom he will bring off more than conquerors above in glory. Now as, of all the organs of the body, the eye is best suited to take in the beauty of this lower world; so is faith, of all the graces of the Spirit, best suited to take in the glory of Christ. This leads me to the fourth thing I proposed.

4. I shall say something concerning the use of faith in the business of a sinner's justification before God. That we are justified by faith, is incontestibly a scripture phrase; it is twice used in the words of my text, and very often elsewhere; especially in the New Testament, where we are told, that "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness^b;" that is, to the obtaining of righteousness, as the preposition, *εἰς*, directs us to interpret it; and that "it shall be thus imputed to all who believe^c." The conclusion drawn by the apostle, in that short, but excellent discourse, concerning a sinner's justification before God, in the third chapter of his epistle to the Romans, is very remarkable; "Therefore we conclude, that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law^d;" which scripture phrase is not only repeated, but doubled, in the next verse, save one; "Seeing it is one God, who shall justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith^e;" and is lifted up like a standard in the beginning of the next chapter; "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God, thro' our Lord Jesus Christ^f; who is said to be

^b Rom. iv. 5.

^c Ver. 24.

^d Chap. iii. 28.

^e Ver. 30.

^f Chap. v. 1.

“ the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believes ^g ;” whose righteousness, though it was wrought out, and is laid up with Christ for us, before we believe, is no where spoke of in scripture, as being to and upon us, till such time as we believe; “ But now the righteousness of God, without the law, is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, to all, and upon all them that believe, for there is no difference ^h.” It is not here said, that the comfort flowing from this righteousness is within such as believe, which sometimes is, and at other times is not, but that the righteousness it self is upon them. Thus often is this phrase used by the apostle, in his epistle to the Romans. It is also as often used by him, in his epistle to the erring Galatians, twice, as has been observed in the words of my text, and oftner in the following chapter; “ Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness ⁱ :” “ And the scripture foreseeing that God would justify the Heathen thro’ faith ^k ;” which is as good as repeated: “ So then they who be of faith, that is, who are justified

^g Rom. x. 4.
^k Ver. 8.

^h Chap. iii. 21, 22,

ⁱ Gal. iii. 6.

by faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham¹ :” As is that other phrase ; “ But that no man is justified by the law, in the sight of God, is evident ; for the just by faith shall live^m.” He goes on to tell us, in the same chapter, that “ the scripture has concluded all under sin, that the promise, by faith of Jesus Christ, might be given to them that believeⁿ ;” and that “ the law was our schoolmaster, to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith^o.” He unbosoms himself, and lays open the desires of his own heart, in this weighty affair, in his epistle to the Philippians ; “ And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith^p.” In which place he not only desires to have the peace and comfort which flow from this righteousness, but the righteousness it self, which is by faith ; so that to be justified by faith is a scripture phrase. But we no where read of being justified for our faith, nor of our being justified before faith ; neither of these are scripture phrases ; they who should use them, would teach in words never used by Christ, and his apostles, in teaching do-

¹ Gal. iii. 9. ^m Ver. 11. ⁿ Ver. 22. ^o Ver. 24.
^p Phil. iii. 9.

ctrines which must be express'd in new words, and not in those wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ, which fill both Testaments. How empty, even of sense, would my text be, was its language thus changed? Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but before the faith of Jesus Christ; we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified before we believe. And how empty of the gospel should we read them, Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but for the faith of Jesus Christ; even we have believed in Christ, that we might be justified for our faith in Christ? It is, doubtless, safest, as in walk and worship, so in words and phrases, to keep close to the rule of scripture, and in the things of God, to speak as do the oracles of God; which no Arian or Arminian ever did, nor can do. All new schemes call for a new bible, and errors of all sorts coin new words and phrases. What the heart is in the body, which is first formed, and first moves, that is faith in the new creation; it is first formed, as it were, or at least is first actuated, and drawn forth towards Christ, as he is God's salvation. Regeneration therefore is, for the comfort of babes in Christ, described by the lowest act of faith unfeigned; "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ,

Christ, is born of God ^a ;” which new birth, small as it may appear at the first to be, though but like the dawn of the morn, is the kingdom of God within us.

The use and office of faith, in the business of a sinner’s justification before God, is not to piece out the glorious robe of Christ’s suretyship imputed righteousness ; but faith of the operation of God points out the persons for whom this righteousness is designed by the Father, and was wrought out by the Son ; which may be said of a work of grace in general, and belongs to faith in common with other graces. Faith therefore has a farther office, or is of farther use in our justification ; for it is as the eye of the new creature, by the realizing acts of which the soul takes in the suitableness and worth of the wedding garment ; which appears to be rather a rag, or a cobweb, than a robe, to the most knowing of the children of men, till faith is wrought. It is also the new creatures hand, by which it receives and puts on this garment of salvation, so perfumed with love, the folds of which are so full of grace and truth ; “ the gift of righteousness, as it is called ^r, must have an hand to receive it ; and “ the robe of righteousness, which is the name

^a John v. 1.

^r Rom. v. 17.

given it †, must be put on, and wore before God: They who, under a sense of sin, are summoned by the court of conscience to appear before God, as a Judge, must have something to plead with, and before his majesty: Now as Christ's righteousness is our alone effectual plea for pardon and acceptance, so faith is as the lip of the new creature, by which this righteousness is with all humility urged and pleaded: To do which we are encouraged by scripture declarations, calls, and commands, as well as by examples, and are heard, tho' it is done by us, as with stammering, as well as with trembling lips. Faith is also as the ear of the new creature, by which the awaken'd, quicken'd soul listens to the Lord Jesus Christ, calling upon the very chief of sinners to forsake their sins, and all refuges of lies, and hiding places of falshood, and to look to him as the only finisher of sin, and fulfiller of righteousness, for all righteousness to bring them into, and to continue them in a pardoned, justified, reconciled, adopted state for ever: It is also as the knee of the new creature, by which it bows before Christ, as the Lord our righteousness, and submits, though not without some reluctance, especially at

† *Isai, lxi. 10.*

times, to this way of a sinner's justification before God : It is also as the tongue of the new creature, which shouts grace, grace, as to the whole of our salvation, so to this branch of a sinner's justification, and sings the praises as of its provider, so of him that brought in our justifying righteousness : It is also as the foot of the new creature, by which it walks with, and follows after Christ, as the Lord its righteousness, and by so doing adorns the gospel, as well as evidences it self to be faith unfeigned.

So that the office of faith is to receive from, and not to bring to Christ, unless it be wants and weakness, ill and hell-deservings, sins without number, and obligations to punishment without end. Of all the graces of the Spirit, faith is the most emptying, and accordingly goes empty, poor, and indigent to Christ : Other graces bring something, as it were, along with them ; whereas faith brings nothing to Christ but a naked back. As in nature the hand and the mouth are both of them adapted to receive, the one a gift, the other food ; so is faith adapted to look to, to receive, and to close with the Lord Jesus Christ ; and, having received him, to realize all those scripture motives, by which we are perswaded to abide with him, and to follow him : So that faith in the
busi-

business of justification before God is not to be consider'd as a working, but as a receiving grace, though it is both, and sows in tears of godly sorrow, and works by love; but its first and great business is with the person and righteousness of Christ, particularly to receive the atonement.

To conclude this head. Faith may be said to justify us, in a like sense, that the eye is said to be the light of the body, or the hand to feed and cloath us. Thus Esau is said to live by his bow, by which he got what he lived upon: It is by faith, which is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen, that we realize all that is said in both Testaments concerning Christ, and his righteousness. And as in nature the eye directs the hand, so here the realizing acts of faith direct its receiving acts; not but both are under the influences of the Spirit, and the direction of the word; by which faith is both taught and encouraged to go to God in Christ's name, as the finisher of sin, and fulfiller of all righteousness, and to plead his righteousness to all those blessed ends, for which it was provided by the Father, wrought out by the Son, and is revealed by the Spirit; by doing which heartily and constantly, faith takes in the comfort, and is thereby stirred up to give God the glory of such provision of righteousness.

teousness. It is also made careful to adorn, and concern'd both to vindicate and to propagate the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ, as the Lord our righteousness.

Having thus shew'd the use of faith in a sinner's justification before God, I shall next answer a threefold enquiry.

(1.) One enquiry is, whether faith is only a manifestation of what was actually done from everlasting, as is usually pleaded by those, who are for actual justification from everlasting. That faith of the operation of God is a manifestation of the following things, is readily granted: as that we were loved, and chose, not barely with Christ as an elder brother, but as an head from everlasting, and given to, and made his charge and care, to bring us safe thro' the fall to glory; that in him, as in our Head, and great Representative, we are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places; that he actually sustain'd our persons, and represented them in the fulness of time; and that he finished our sins, and brought in for us everlasting righteousness; that for us he rose from the dead, ascended up into heaven, and is set down on the Father's right hand, where he ever lives to make intercession for us: Of these things, faith is a manifestation, and so is a work of grace in general, as well

well as the grace of faith in particular ; for as in nature the eye laid to the smallest chink, may, through that, see the sun shining in its meridian strength, so in the case before us, an eye of faith may, by reflecting on it self, or on any other of the graces of the Spirit, though they spring up in the heart, but, like a grain of mustard-seed, look both backwards and forwards ; backwards to a being chose in Christ from everlasting ; and forwards to a living and reigning with Christ to everlasting : But though faith is a manifestation of God's eternal purposes taken in Christ, and his covenant transactions with him ; yet, in the business of a sinner's justification, it must be more than a manifestation, for the following reasons.

[1.] Because the saints are said, in scripture, to have access by faith into the grace wherein they stand ; “ Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ ; by whom we have access by faith, into the grace wherein we stand ;” that is, we stand actually pardoned, and actually justified before God, as well as actually reconciled with God. These privileges, with all others of a like nature, were designed for the elect from everlasting, and given them in Christ, their

Head, and great Representative, before the world began; but they have not, according to the scriptures, access to them, or a standing in them, as to their own persons, such as is actual and applicatory, till such time as they are born again, or believe. Thus the sun, moon, and stars, were lighted and hung up in the firmament, long before any of us were born, or had a bodily eye; but their light was not actually let in, or brought into us; no, not a single beam, till such time as the eye was form'd, and we were born into this world; then, and not before, were we filled with the light of the natural sun, and were actually possessed of its rays to the several ends and uses for which they are given us. Thus gifts, how freely soever they may be designed for us, and given to us, are not ours before we receive them: There must be the receiving, as well as the giving hand, before the poor are actually possessed of the rich man's alms. Thus it is in the affair before us: Christ's righteousness is called a gift, which is received by faith; "How much more shall they, who receive an abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness^a;" which sufficiently intimates, that though this gift of righteousness is designed for us,

^a Rom. v, 13.

yet it is not ours for our personal and actual justification, till we believe. It is not a pardon in the king's design and purpose; nor in the secretaries office; nor in the messenger's hand; no, nor in the malefactor's pocket, that will set the criminal free, in the eye of the law; it must be produced and pleaded in open court. Now both God's courts are still to be met with in the scriptures; in the law is that of Sinai, and in the gospel is that of Zion: Faith of the operation of God appeals from that of Sinai to that of Zion, where it pleads this righteousness; and so doing, the guilty self-condemned sinner is, according to the rule of the word, really and actually acquitted, and declared righteous, with equal certainty, though not with like solemnity, as it will be declared in the last and great day of publick judgment; and may, on sure scripture grounds, take in the comfort, and give God the glory of so great a blessing, as a being freed from hell, and entitled to heaven, by being made the righteousness of God, in a way of union with the Lord Jesus Christ. Federal representation and vital union, a being represented by Christ, and a being united to the Lord Jesus Christ, must be different things; though the former is the foundation or ground work of the latter. To be represented by Christ, belongs

to the whole election of the Father's grace, long before they are either born, or born again; but united to Christ they are not, till they are born again; for it is impossible to be united to such a living, life-giving head, as Christ is, and yet remain dead in sins. Dead sinners may be represented by Christ, and are so, even as many of them as belong to the election of the Father's grace; but not a soul that is united to Christ can remain dead in sins; "To whom coming, as to a living stone; you also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house w."

To have access into the grace of justification, and a standing therein, must be more than a manifestation: As the prodigals being cloathed with the best robe, and entering into his father's house, and sitting down at his father's table, was more than his seeing these things far off, and at a distance. This is one reason why faith, in the business of justification, must be more than a bare manifestation; which is wholly scriptural; and so is that which follows.

[2.] The double simile which the Spirit of God makes use of, in speaking of faith's use and office in this weighty affair, discovers it to be more than a manifestation:

w 1 Pet. ii. 4.

He compares it to a hand, as well as to an eye. How often are its receiving acts, as well as those that are realizing, mentioned in scripture? "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God; even to them that believed on his name^x:" "Much more shall they, who receive an abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, reign in life by one Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the atonement^y." All which are scripture phrases, as well as those by which the realizing acts of faith are held forth. Now was faith only a manifestation, why should it be compared to a hand, as well as to an eye.

[3.] Faith in the business of justification, must be more than a manifestation; because was it no other, other graces would share with faith, in its use and office, as it respects our justification; for they all speak by way of manifestation, and evidence our being loved, and chose in Christ from everlasting; "Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God; for our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, &c.^z." So that we might, with equal propriety of language, be said to be justified by repentance, or

^x John i. 13.
i. 4, 5.

^y Rom. v. 11.

^z 1 Thess.

by love, or by humility, as by faith; which we are no where said to be in scripture; such expressions would be unscriptural and unwarrantable: They would grate upon the ear, and grieve the heart of a true believer.

[4.] Faith, in the business of justification, is more than a manifestation, because was it no more, it would unavoidably follow, that one believer might be more justified, in the scripture sense and acceptance of that word, than another, as his manifestation thereof may be clearer and fuller, and the same person more justified at one time, than at another, as his manifestation or apprehension thereof lessens or increases, of which we have not the least intimation in scripture, but of the contrary. A believer's comfort may ebb and flow, but, in point of justification, his state is the same.

To conclude this first head of enquiry: Did the gospel phrase and notion of justification by faith, include no more than a manifestation to our sense and apprehension, it would also follow, that they who walk in darkness, and have lost their sight and sense of their being justified, which is the case of many a soul, that is truly gracious, would, in the sense of the gospel, be no longer in a justified state, but be fallen from the grace of justification: A

believer, in the dark, would be no more justified, than he was whilst shut up in unbelief; all which is unscriptural, and smells rank of the Arminians, who hold a falling from grace.

(2.) I shall come to a second enquiry; whether the believer may, in any sense, be said to be justified before faith. To which I would answer, not actually, but virtually, in Christ, but not together with Christ; in designation and purchase, but not in application and fact. Christ's righteousness is designed and wrought out for him, but is not to, nor upon him, in the sense of the gospel, before he believes: He is a Son elect, but no more; "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them who believed on his name^a;" this is a full proof they were not before what they then became, or began to be. That God purposed, from everlasting, thus to privilege and bless his people in time, is not question'd; nor that all the elect were virtually justified, when Christ, their great Head and Representative, was so actually. But as the scripture carefully distinguishes between a being blessed in Christ, and a being blessed together with Christ, so should we; "Blessed be the God and Fa-

^a John i, 12;

ther of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ ^b ;” which “ all ” must take in the blessings of glory, as well as those of grace : But tho’ now we are glorified in Christ, we, who believe, hope one day to be glorified together with Christ ; “ When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we shall appear with him in glory ^c .” We readily own, that God had in purpose, from everlasting, all the glory and blessedness to which he will bring his people to everlasting ; but to say, that the elect were from everlasting, actually possessed of any one of them, actually pardoned, or actually justified, is to make them, or at least to speak of them, as if they were co-eternal beings with the eternal God.

How expressly are we told, in scripture, that, in point of actual existence, “ that is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural ; and afterwards that which is spiritual ^d ? ” And if so, the elect not only actually exist, but are actually condemn’d, by the law of God, before they are actually justified. As the imputation of Christ’s righteousness presupposes the being of him, who imputes, and his actually sustaining the character, both of a Judge and of a Saviour ; so it presupposes the existence of

^b Eph. i. 3.

^c Col. iii. 4.

^d 1 Cor. xv. 46.

the creature, and that he is a sinner to whom Christ's righteousness is imputed. As all the existence men or angels have before time, is in purpose, so all the imputation that is from everlasting, must be in purpose also. To talk of God's actually imputing a thing of that worth, as is Christ's righteousness to nothing, or to that which has as yet no actual being, that he should actually impute righteousness to a non ens, or to one who as yet is not, is to talk not only unscripturally, but unintelligibly.

Though God design'd, from everlasting, to give us an actual being, yet we did not actually exist, but in time: Thus it is in the case before us; though God actually purposed, and that from everlasting, to justify the whole election of his grace, yet they are not actually justified, but in time. Christ's righteousness was both designed and wrought out for us, whilst lying in the womb of God's decrees, but is not upon us till we believe.

Not only designation and possession are different things, the one being a step to the other, but so are right and possession, quite round the globe. An estate may be designed for a first-born, whilst in the womb, and be bought for, and settled on him, as soon as born; so firmly settled, as to leave no room for its being alienated,
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and yet the heir not be in actual possession thereof. Actual possession, be it of a crown, takes place according to the constitution of the kingdom, and the methods of government, which, in all wise administrations, are settled, and not left uncertain and precarious. Now is the order of civil governments great, and that of God's government of the world of nature yet greater; and is there no such thing as order in the gospel? Is that without beauty and method, which is the glory of all kingdoms? There, and no where else, must we look for the methods of wisdom, and the order of God, as they relate to the application of salvation. This proclaims as on the house top, that though Christ's righteousness was wrought out for us, long before we believe, it is not upon us till we believe. Paul was a chosen vessel before he believed; but where is he said to have been pardoned, or justified, or reconciled, or adopted, whilst lying out from and persecuting the Lord Jesus Christ?

As the whole of our salvation by Christ, so this of a sinner's justification before God, is represented in scripture, and should be consider'd by us, under different views; it is to be consider'd as it lies in the gracious design and purpose of God, whose purposes without his power bring nothing into being; for if they did, this world,

with all the things of time, must have existed from everlasting; to assert which, would include the greatest of absurdities. It must be consider'd, as it lies in the covenant transactions between the Father and the Son, who was set up from everlasting, as the Head and Surety of a better covenant. It must be consider'd, as it lies in the purchase of Christ; who, in the fulness of time, finished transgression, made an end of sin, and reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness. It must be consider'd, as it lies in the gospel, where Christ's righteousness is reveal'd, in the suitableness and glory thereof, and is expressly said to be to all, and upon all such as believe, without difference, where it is brought near to sinners in the offer. A sinner's justification may and should be consider'd, as it is the birth of time, and so personal and actual, in the joyful and blessed application thereof.

Now as salvation, in the designation thereof, is not to be blended with salvation in the impetration; nor with salvation in the application thereof, so neither is justification; but a real scriptural difference should carefully be kept up by us. The distinction of virtual and actual, has its use and place in scripture, as well as in nature: In nature the case is plain; for the earth virtually contains all the fruit
that

that will be brought forth, and ripen'd not only the next summer, but an hundred years hence ; whence it follows not, that trees are now full of ripe fruit. The sea also virtually contains all fountains and rivers that can possibly flow from it, even as eternity contains all possible time : And no less plain is the case as to scripture, where Christ is said to be a Lamb, slain from the foundation of the world, which cannot be understood of his being actually crucified before he was born ; but the slaying there mentioned, must be virtual, and not actual. It is one thing for Christ's righteousness to be wrought out, and laid up, as it were, for us ; and a different thing to have this righteousness upon us, in the sense of the gospel. The coronation robes of a king, and the wedding garments of a bride, or bridegroom, are, or at least may be, made and finished long before they are put on, and wore. Our wedding robe of justifying righteousness is with Christ our Head, as a garment completely finished, with whom it is safe and most secure ; but it is far above and out of the sinner's sight and reach, till such time as it is given him, for this righteousness sake to believe ; for faith, with all the graces of the Spirit, as well as glory, is the purchase of this righteousness ; which, being seated in the heart, brings the soul off from

all its refuges of lyes, and hiding places of falshood, to take shelter under the shadow of Christ's wing, as he is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes. Thus; "With the heart man believes to righteousness," and is no longer among those whom the word of God condemns^e, but justifies, and is so declared to be, by the united voice of both Testaments.

God himself distinguishes between his own counsels, and the execution of them; "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure^f;" which we have in other words; "The Lord of hosts has sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand^g:" Who is said to work all things after the counsel of his own will; "In whom we also have obtain'd an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him, who works all things after the counsel of his own will^h." God's counsels, as they lie in the divine mind and will, without the intervention of his power, bring nothing into being, as has been observed. In these counsels Christ himself lay, as man and Mediator, and was consider'd by God, as the finisher of sin, and as the fulfiller of all righteousness;

^e Rom. x. 13.

^f Isai. xlv. 1c.

^g Isai. xiv. 24.

^h Eph i. 11.

but this gave not an actual existence to the incarnation, death, or sufferings of Christ, before the fulness of time.

All the purposes of God, as they are in him, are immanent acts; his whole counsel is so, as it takes in his works of nature, grace, and glory. Now if this, without the intervention of his power, gives actual being to any thing; to our justification, for instance, by a parity of reason, it should give actual being to every thing; to this world, and to all that is therein; to the church militant, and to the church triumphant. Things of time are otherwise consider'd by God, when actually existing, than they were by him, before his power had brought them into being: Before they had a being, they were consider'd by him as things to be; but when actually existing, as things that are; and yet, by reason of certainty, as to the execution of his decrees, he calls things which are not, as tho' they were. Possibles are consider'd by him as they lie in his almighty power; things future, as they lie in his sovereign will and pleasure; and things actually existing, as put forth, and brought into being by him.

To conclude this head. We cannot be justified in the sense of the gospel before faith, because the word of God is express, that we are justified by faith. Christ's
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righteousness is not upon us, in the sense of the gospel, before faith; for the gospel is express, that it is to and upon us, in a way of believing; and should men or angels tell us the contrary, we are not to regard them.

(3.) I shall add a word to the third and last enquiry. How is it that elect infants, dying in their infancy, are justified? I answer, by faith in the habit, though not by faith in the act: Faith of the operation of God is not confined to years; an elect infant is as capable a subject thereof, as grown persons. As all are born, shut up in unbelief; so omnipotent grace can open those prison doors, when and how it pleases. In the short account which we have of salvation in the application thereof, as it respects the whole election of the Father's grace, they are said to be first called, and so justified, and then glorified; "Whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorifiedⁱ." Now an elect infant is as capable of this, as a grown person; of being effectually called, or renewed by grace; of being freely justified, and for ever glorified.

All the application I would make, shall be adding two words, by way of enquiry.

ⁱ Rom. viii. 30.

Where is it that you have lodged your guilty souls? and what is it that you have done with your many sins?

I. Where have you lodged your guilty souls? Hiding places of falshood are many; these are crowded; sinners flock to them by thousands. God's hiding place is but one, but one under both Testaments; where Abraham took shelter, who saw Christ's day, as the only sacrifice for sin; and Moses, whose dispensation was full of him; and David, with all the prophets, who wrote of him; there did the apostle Paul. Old and New Testament saints fought righteousness to justification and life, only in the Lord; "Surely shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength; in the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory^k." Christ's wing, as the finisher of sin, and the fulfiller of all righteousness, which spreads it self throughout the whole book of God, is the one and only shelter for guilty sinners. Had a stung Israelite, instead of looking out to the brazen serpent, gone to prayer, would he have been cured? No, surely. Now did God put such honour upon his own ordinance, under the Old Testament; and will he not put as great honour upon his Son, the Lord Jesus

^k Isai. xlv. 25.

Christ, under the New? who is his salvation to the end of time, as well as to the ends of the earth. Cornelius bid as fair for salvation out of Christ, as any man living; for the angel told him, that his prayer was heard, and his alms had in remembrance in the sight of God; and yet he also told him, that Peter was to inform him how he and his house should be saved; “Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved¹ ;” which is a plain case, and a full proof, that out of Christ there is no salvation. Cornelius’s case is so far from depreciating Christ and his gospel, that both are thereby exalted; and thus the light and law of nature cannot supply the want of Christ. Was there such a man as Cornelius now alive, an angel, or some one acquainted with the gospel, would be sent to preach Christ to him, though he lived in the farthest and darkest corner of the earth.

2. What have you done with your many sins? The only care of some is, to extenuate their sins, and of others to forget them; but all who have faith unfeigned, wash in that fountain, which God has opened for sin and for uncleanness: All other lavers are so far from cleansing, that

¹ Acts xi. 14.

they pollute and defile the soul ; it is “ the blood of Jesus Christ, God’s own and only begotten Son, that cleanses from all sin ^m ;” the conscience from the guilt, and the heart from the love, and the life from the rule and dominion of sin.

But you will say, it may be, that you would gladly thus take shelter under the wing of Christ, and thus wash in the blood of Christ ; but you fear your faith is forc’d and feigned. To which I answer : How is it that your faith sows ; and how is it that it works ? Does it sow in tears of godly sorrow for sin ; and does it work by love ? If it does both these, you may rest assured it is faith of the right kind, and that you shall reap in joy.

To conclude : With all your gettings, your first and chief care should be to get faith, which has so many precious promises made to it ; not only of salvation and eternal life, in the general, but of forgiveness of sin, of justification, of reconciliation, of adoption, and of sanctification in particular. To work which the Spirit is promised, and the scriptures are wrote ; to give which Christ is exalted, and a throne of grace is erected. Remember, faith comes by hearing ; not the sayings of a Plato, or of a Seneca, but the word

of God, as it is contained in the Bible ; which is a book so prefaced, as no other book is, and so attested : For the Old Testament is prefaced by Israel's deliverance out of Egypt, and by all the miracles wrought by the hand of Moses, in bringing it about, which was effected before the five books of Moses were wrote ; and the New Testament, by all the miracles wrought by Christ ; who was born, crucified, raised from the dead, and ascended up into heaven, before any of that was writ : And as it is a book so prefaced, as book never was, so never was book so well attested as the Bible is ; not only by a cloud of witnesses, or by the experience of all the saints, both dead and alive, who have found, and still find, in numberless instances, these things to be facts and truths, which are therein related ; or by miracles of all sorts, and by a cloud of martyrs, who, by thousands, have sealed with their blood what they know of its being the book of God, or of the truths contained therein ; but it is gloriously attested, by being undeniably wrote on the palms of God's hands in his providential dispensations ; who, to go no higher, in the rise, succession, riches, and duration of the four universal monarchies, has been fulfilling scripture prophecy, and so he has in the rejection and present state of the
Jews,

Jews, who many days have been without a king, a sacrifice and an idol, according to scripture prophecy. How exactly is the New Testament a fulfilling of the Old; and not only the present state of Europe, as to its division into ten kingdoms; the kings of which have, according to scripture prophecy, given away their power to the beast; but the present state of all the world is visibly a fulfilling of scripture prophecy? Are not the Jews, at this day, the scatter'd and the despised people the scriptures say they should be? Is not Antichrist the long-lived man of sin, and the cruel man of blood, the scriptures say he should be? Are not the Pagan parts of the world the dark places, and the habitations of cruelty, the scripture says they should be? Do not the seven Asiatick churches lie desolate, as they were threaten'd by Christ, unless they repented? Is not Mahomet the false prophet, the scriptures say he should be? And are not his followers many, like the waters of a great river, the river Euphrates, to which they are compared in scripture? Does not the whole world lie in wickedness, as the scriptures say it does? And is not every saint as a brand pluck'd out of the burning, as the scriptures say they are? Are not the Deists the scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and ridiculing the promise of Christ's coming,

ming, as the scriptures say they should? Are not the black marks of those perilous times, the last days, upon us? Are not the foolish virgins as many, nay more, than the wise? And are not all slumbering and sleeping, as the scriptures say they would be? Let us therefore prise the book of God, as a king does his crown, and hold it fast, as a king does his sceptre: Let us lay it up in the cabinet of the heart, and express it throughout the whole of our lives: Let us view Christ and our selves, his wisdom, and our own folly; his righteousness, and our own guilt; his riches, and our own poverty; his fulness, and our own emptiness; his strength, and our own weakness, in the light thereof: In this the infinite worth of Christ, and the true value of grace, and use of faith, and of every thing else, is faithfully set down; according to which, “all who believe are justified, from all things from which there was no being justified by the law of Moses ⁿ.”

ⁿ Acts xiii. 39.





S E R M O N I V.

GAL. ii. 16.

Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ; that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

BY far the greatest of all sub-
lunary transactions, with an eye
to which the foundations of the
first Adam's world were laid,
was, as we learn from scripture, the ap-
pearing of Christ, the second Adam, to
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take away sin; his incarnation is spoke of in both Testaments, as the foundation and chief corner stone of God's world of nature, as well as of his kingdom of grace and of glory. In the Old Testament, "I have put my words in thy mouth, and cover'd thee in the shadow of my hand, said God to the Mediator, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth; and say to Zion, Thou art my people ^a;" that is, do it with the greatest certainty, so as to receive from all a full revenue of glory. In the New Testament we are told, that "all things were created for Christ ^b;" and that by him all things consist ^c."

As man was created the mouth of this lower creation, in point of praise, and in point of service, as the hand thereof; for what would this world have signified, had no man been form'd to adore, and serve him that made it? So our Immanuel is as the hand in point of service; therefore he is called, "the man of God's right hand ^d;" and in point of praise he is as the mouth of the whole universe. By him God receives, and will receive for ever, such a revenue of glory, as could no other way have been paid to him. Mere creatures,

^a Isai. li. 16.

^b Coloss. i. 16.

^c Jer. 17.

^d Psal. lxxx. 17.

whether they are men or angels, being mutable by nature, may praise God, and serve him one day, and be struck dumb to praise, and grow lame to his service the next, as in the case of the non-elect angels, and of our first parents; whereas our Immanuel is the same yesterday, to day, and for ever, and, as such, is a fit basis to support the whole universe. Is it beneath the wisdom of a king to order his palace to be built on a quick sand, or his crown and sceptre to be made of glass? and will God entrust reeds and rushes, that is, mere creatures, with the manifestation of his glory? Firm and strong, as the pillars of heaven, and of this earth may be; they owe all their stability and strength to Christ, and so do elect men, and angels theirs; in answering the ends, the one of their creation, the other of their redemption; to the same Jesus, who is said “to bear up the pillars of the earth^e,” and “to uphold all things by the word of his power^f,” which includes heaven as well as earth; and is called, by God, “his righteous Servant, in whom he will be glorified^g.” That Christ should be able, in the short space of thirty odd years, to finish transgression, and to make an end of sin, and reconciliation for iniquity, and to

^e Psal. lxxv. 3.

^f Heb. i. 3.

^g Isai. xlix. 3.

bring in everlasting righteousness, is a like wonder, with God's creating such a world as this is, in the space of six days. How will it astonish and delight us, when we come to glory, to think, that the Lord of heaven and earth should be the Lord our righteousness? That he, who there sits on the Father's throne, should, to bring about our justification and salvation, consent to hang in this lower world on a tree? Between whose righteousness, its being upon us for our actual justification and faith of the operation of God, there is, for the comfort of all who believe, a close connexion, which is my next head of discourse.

5. I shall evince the sure connexion there is between faith and actual justification.

There is an eternal connexion in God's purposes and decrees, who has said; "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." Men and devils may sooner invert the beautiful order of nature, and extinguish sun, moon, and stars, than disannul what the purpose of God has thus connected: There is also an eternal connexion by way of covenant, it being thus agreed in the counsel of peace between the Father and the Son: There is also a purchased connexion, obtain'd and seal'd, as it were, by the blood of Christ: There is an openly declared connexion published
in

in the book of God, and by the ministers of the gospel, to all the world: There is a promised connexion confirm'd by oath; for the oath of God, as it is recorded in his word, reaches and confirms every truth contain'd therein, whereby all gospel immunities, privileges, and blessings, are abundantly secured to such as believe. It is also an experienced connexion; all, in all ages and places, that ever believed, whether saints of the Old, or of the New Testament, have, without one exception, been justified; and so are all who now believe justified, let their lot be cast where it will; babes, as well as fathers in Christ; and so shall all who, in after ages, to the very end of time, shall be brought to believe: For that great text looks forward as well as backward; "By him all who believe are justified, from all things ^h." Should such of us as believe, be declared justified, by an audible voice from heaven, or by an angel sent from thence, it would not be so satisfying, nor so establishing, as the united testimony of Moses, and of all the prophets; of Christ, and of all his apostles, as it stands recorded in both Testaments. We may safely say, that the earth may sooner sink under our feet, and the heavens over our heads vanish, than a

^h Acts xiii. 39.

true believer be condemned ; which connexion is thus settled and secured, that we might have strong consolation, who are fled for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before us in the gospel. This connexion I take to be part of the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which makes every true believer “ free from the law of sin and death ⁱ.”

6. My next province is, to assign to good works their proper use in this weighty affair, according to the scriptures, which are most express, in excluding the best of works performed by the best of saints, from being either in whole, or in part, our justifying righteousness before God. Thus Abraham’s works, though very excellent in themselves, are carefully excluded ; “ What shall we say then, that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, has found ? for if Abraham was justified by works, he has whereof to glory ; but he was not so justified before God ^k.” That this is the sense and meaning of this verse, is plain from the next ; “ For what says the scripture, Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness ^l.” His readiness to offer his son, by way of sacrifice, at God’s command, was a high instance of obedience ; but this was

ⁱ Rom. viii. 2.

^k Chap. iv. 2.

^l Ver. 3.

not counted to him for righteousness, as to be sure it would have been, and set as in the front of Abraham's good works, had they been either in whole, or in part, his justifying righteousness before God. David's resolution to make mention of God's righteousness, and of that only, must be exclusive of all those works of righteousness, which might be called his own. Thus the apostle's desire to be found in Christ, not having his own righteousness, excludes not only some, but all those works of righteousness he had wrought, or should maintain, to the very end of life ; though he was a tree of righteousness, more and more loaded therewith. His saying, not of works, lest any man should boast, bars them from being part of our justifying righteousness before God ; and so does that other text, " Now to him that works not, but believes on him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness ^m." But we need go no further than my text for the full proof of this : It was, in primitive times, a known truth, which none disputed, that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ. We may safely conclude therefore, as the apostle does, that " we are justified by faith, without

^m Rom. iv. 5.

the deeds of the law; for by the law is the knowledge of sin ⁿ." The dagger that gives the wound, may as soon cure it, as the law justify any: Such as thus seek to be justified, are so far from attaining their end, that they are doctrinally "fallen from grace ^o," and do as much as in them lies to make the death of Christ vain and ineffectual ^p. Good works, how spiritual and heavenly soever they may be, are not a valuable consideration laid down by us, for the robe of Christ's righteousness; which can no more be purchased by us, than the power of giving the Holy Ghost could by Simon the forcerer. Such a purchase would aggrandize the saint to the depreciating of the Saviour, whose righteousness is called a gift, but not once a sale, in scripture; neither are good works our warrant to look to Christ for righteousness, to justification and life. To bar this, we are told, as has been observed, how it is, that, as to our selves, we are consider'd by God, when he justifies any; not as saints, but as sinners: "But to him that works not, but believes on him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Our warrant to receive Christ, as the Lord our righteousness, is not human, but divine; the call and promise of

ⁿ Rom. iii. 20.^o Gal. v. 4.^p Chap. ii. 21.

the gospel, and not any worth or worthiness in us ; “ Not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us.”

But though the best of works are no part of our justifying righteousness before God, all good works evidence our being among the number of God’s justified ones. This they do, as they speak our faith to be unfeigned ; a faith of the right kind, which works by love : They also do it, as they speak our union to Christ to be real, that we are truly one spirit with the Lord ; so that good works evidence our justification, as good fruit evidences the goodness of the tree ; and as streams that are sweet, speak the sweetness of the fountain.

7. I shall next consider, whether the law is of any use in the business of a sinner’s justification before God, and shew of what use it is. The moral law is the great standard of all righteousness : Had not Christ’s suretyship righteousness come up, in every point, to this perfect rule, neither he himself, as Mediator, nor any of his, could have been justified ; the curse of which law, as a broken covenant, reaches sinners of all ranks and degrees, whilst lying out from Christ : It is therefore of no small use, in the hand of the Spirit, to awaken those of God’s elect, where the gospel comes ; by which they are not only
struck

struck dumb and silenced, as to all pleas, by way of excuse, but dead, as to all hopes of establishing a justifying righteousness of their own. Thus the apostle Paul, who, whilst a dead pharisee was alive in his own conceit, without the law; when that came in its spirituality and extent, sin so revived, as to the sense of it, that he died; and the commandment, which was originally ordain'd to life, and was so given to our first parents, he found to be to death; for instead of justifying, by it is the knowledge of sin, and consequently it must of necessity condemn the sinner: This holds true of all laws, if transgress'd; but more especially of the moral.

The law, in the Spirit's hand, shews to awakened sinners both their misery and their impotency; what it is they owe, by way of satisfaction, as well as by way of service, and how unable they are to pay; that they are brands, but cannot pluck themselves out of the burning. It also witnesses to the perfection and worth of Christ's suretyship righteousness, and directs all cloath'd therewith how they ought to walk and please God.

I shall now observe of what use the written word is in this weighty affair, of which the law and light of nature knew nothing before the fall, the whole thereof being matter of pure revelation; "If thou dost
well,

well, shalt thou not be accepted ^a ?” is the language of creation-due ; but our being justified by faith, and accepted to eternal life, in the beloved, is all of grace, and the peculiar language of the gospel. Both Testaments are full of the glory of Christ, as the Lord our righteousness, and of encouragement to seek to him for all righteousness, to bring us into, and to continue us in a pardoned, justified, reconciled, adopted state for ever : Both Testaments also testify, that “ in the Lord shall all the believing seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory ^r ;” whose faith, in opposition to the Popish notion of believing as the church believes, is described by knowledge ; “ By his knowledge shall my righteous Servant justify many ^t ;” of which we have a more full and particular account in the New Testament, especially in the epistle to the Romans, where this righteousness is called a gift ; and is, in so many words, said “ to be to all, and upon all them” that believe, and that without difference ; as really to all justifying intents and purposes upon Abraham’s believing seed, as upon Abraham the father of the faithful, as really upon New Testament saints, as upon those of the Old ; as really upon us, at this distance of time, as upon pri-

^a Gen. iv. 7.

^r Isai. xlv. 24.

^t Chap. xliii. 11.

mitive saints, and the apostles themselves ; as really upon babes, as upon fathers in Christ. Were Moses, and all the prophets, upon earth ; was Paul, with all the apostles, here ; and should the true believer ask them their thoughts concerning his state, they would unanimously declare him a justified person : One freed from all condemnation on the one hand, and entitled to heaven on the other. God's written word is full of the excelling worth of this righteousness, and of the gracious designs of God in providing it : How and to what ends it is upon us who believe, and with what certainty and success. There we have the Father's testimony concerning his Son, as the Lord our righteousness, and his command to us to hear him ; whose calls and counsels direct to Christ, as the end of the law for righteousness, and whose charge is to go no where else. In the word, we are taught the one and only way of a sinner's justification before God ; and, by the same word, we are directed and encouraged to get into it, and to abide therein. Here the purposes of God are put into promises, that faith may go to a throne of grace, and plead them. Grace in the heart and purpose of God, is like gold in the mine ; but grace in the promise, be it those promises which relate to our justification, or any other gospel privilege,

vilege, are like gold in the mint ; they are ours to traffick with, in a spiritual sense.

I shall next consider the use of conscience, in this momentous affair. In this court, the law keeps its register, as it relates to duty, and to sin ; and the justice of God an account of the numbers, and aggravating circumstances of every sinner's sins, how great sinners they are in the eye of the law, and what is due to them, according to the righteous judgment of God, for their sins. Here God's testimony concerning his Son is received, when this court is purged and renewed ; and our believing with the heart is noted or set down. All the witnesses to a believer's justification are heard in this court, and all objections against it are here canvas'd and answer'd. In this court, the world, the flesh, and the devil, lodge their accusations against the believer, drawn from the strength of his corruptions, and from the weakness of his faith ; and here it is that they are removed : So that this court, which once was full of bribes, and false reports, as well as with false witnesses, being renewed by the Spirit of Christ, and sprinkled with his blood, is, less or more, fill'd with peace and with joy in believing. This matchless robe of righteousness has in the folds thereof peace with God ; and all cloathed there-
with

with may and should rejoice in the hope of his glory : They should also glory in tribulation, and call the world's frowns theirs, as well as its smiles ; adversity, as well as prosperity ; and death it self, as well as life. This they are enabled, in some good measure, to do ; when he, who searches the deep things of God, is pleased to shine in upon their graces, and to shed abroad the love of God, in the provision and gift of this righteousness in their hearts, and to witness with their spirits that therein they are made the righteousness of God ; who, as he is Christ's glorifier, never sets his seal to a blank for the world, the flesh, and the devil, to fill up at pleasure, as some libertines would persuade themselves and others ; but first renews and works faith, and so witnesses to his own work : In the light of whose witnessing presence, the robe of Christ's righteousness appears to be most glorious, and all cloathed therewith to be most safe and happy ; by which their doubts are answer'd, and all their fears are scatter'd, and they go on their way rejoicing ; instead of sinning, they are brought to obey, with an high hand of filial love and reverence ; and find, by blessed experience, that the joy of the Lord is their strength, to bear, as well as to do his will. As the least mote makes the eye water, so the least

least sin makes the conscience, that is sprinkled with the blood of Christ, smite ; other consciences may be scrupulous, but these only are truly tender.

IV. My last work shall be to guard against errors of all sorts, in the business of a sinner's justification before God.

The law, as a covenant of works was our first husband ; to it, as such, we were all espoused, in the first Adam ; the language of which is, Do this, and live. Now, though the law is weak, through the flesh, and cannot possibly justify any, but is strong to condemn ; yet such is the pride of every natural man's heart, that he had much rather, with the carnal Jews, go to Sinai, than to Zion, for a justifying righteousness ; and, with the Papists, be at any cost and pains to establish a justifying righteousness of his own, than to submit to Christ's.

I shall begin with the error of the Jews, particularly of the proud conceited Pharisees, in the business of justification before God. Of this we have the best account, both from the pen and from the practice of the apostle Paul, whilst a Pharisee, from his pen : " What shall we say then ? that the Gentiles, who followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness,
even

even the righteousness which is of faith: But Israel, who followed after the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness: Wherefore? because they sought it not by faith, but, as it were, by the works of the law †.” They were for a Sinai covenant and righteousness, and not for that of mount Sion. Though they were a generation of vipers, and whited sepulchres, especially the Pharisees; yet they were for establishing a justifying righteousness of their own, as is evident, beyond all contradiction; “ For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God ‡.” We have also a full account of this from the apostle’s practice, whilst a Pharisee, of which he gives a very particular account, in his third chapter to the Philippians: He has told us what pains he took, and how great a proficient he was, in the school of the law, as a covenant; “ Touching the righteousness which is of the law blameless ¤.” This is last mentioned, because he verily thought, whilst he was a blind Pharisee, that it added weight and worth to all those external privileges he there enumerated: But upon his being made light in the Lord, he spoke in a

† Rom. iv. 30.

‡ Chap. x. 3.

¤ Phil. iii. 6.

quite different language ; “ That I may be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith ^w.” From Christ’s parable of the Pharisee and of the publican, it appears that the righteousness which the former trusted to, and pleaded before God, was a comparative righteousness ; “ God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are ^x.”

I shall next consider the error which infected the churches of Galatia, in the business of justification before God ; which was this : They joined together mount Sinai and mount Zion, and blended the two dispensations ; that of the law, and that of the gospel, and put the veil of Moses over the face, or gospel of Jesus Christ, in the business of justification before God. This is the least that can be said of their mistake ; though it is plain, from the two following texts, that they took wider and worse steps, in joining the works, both of the moral and of the ceremonial law with the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord our righteousness, who is the end of both for righteousness, to every one that believes : The one is ; “ If righteousness comes by the law, then Christ is dead in vain ^y.” An

^w Phil. iii. 9.^x Luke i. 8.^y Gal. ii. 21.

awful word, which should put all upon their guard, as to the important doctrine of a sinner's justification before God; an error in which is of such fatal tendency; the other is, "Whosoever of you are justified by the law, you are fallen from grace^z;" that is, doctrinally. It is observable with what sharpness he, who, at other times, was gentle among the saints, "even as a nurse cherishes her children^a," reproved the erring Galatians, whose error he calls, "a perverting the gospel of Christ^b."

I shall next consider that of the Pelagians. The error of Pelagius was his exalting the free will of the creature above the free grace of God, in all the articles of salvation, and consequently in this of justification: He laid aside the doctrine of Christ's imputed, for that of our own inherent righteousness; that free will might have of its own, wherein to trust, whereof to glory, and wherewith to come before God. Thus unmindful was he, and so are all his followers, of what Christ has told us; "As the branch cannot bear fruit of it self, except it abides in the vine, no more can you, except you abide in me; for without me you can do nothing^c." These pervert the order of grace, as much as the order

^z Gal. v. 4.^a 1 Thess. ii. 7.^b Gal. i. 7.^c John xv. 4, 5.

of nature would be perverted, should any say, that the branch bears the root, and that without the root the branch might blossom, and bring forth fruit. That great text, so expressive of the grace and order of the gospel, is a full confutation of Pelagianism; "By grace are you saved through faith, and that not of your selves: It is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast; for we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to good works, which God has before ordained, that we should walk in them ^d." To be sure, Pelagius was one of the greatest patrons of free will, and as bitter an enemy to free grace; as the church ever was troubled with; his leven has spread it self far and near, and is like so to do more and more, under latter day darkness.

In the same path Arius before trod, with this dreadful addition, his affirming Christ to be no more than a creature, though he made him to be the first and chief of mere creatures: Thus he robb'd Christ, at once, of the divinity of his Person, and of his crown, as Mediator: According to whom, the great end of all he either did or suffer'd, was partly to confirm his doctrine and mission, and partly to set his people an example; but he utterly denied his being,

^d Eph. ii. 8, 9, 10.

in a true and proper sense, the Lord our righteousness, or the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes: And so did Socinus, with this farther addition, that he made Christ to be a creature of a late date, who had no existence, save in type and promise, before the fullness of time. Thus wilfully did he shut his eyes against that great chapter, the first of John, which alone is a full confutation of his soul-ruining error; where Christ is not represented as beginning with time, but as existing before all time: It is not, in the beginning did the word begin to be; “ But in the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, eternal, as being God; for so it follows, and the word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. He was in the world, and the world was made by him ^e.” The Arminians also are for being justified by free will righteousness, and not from free grace: The glorious gift of righteousness, which has so much grace in it, and accompanying of it, is by them despised; and a rag of their own, a sorry web, which God has said shall never become a garment, is preferred. They shamefully wrest and darken

^e John i. 1, 2, 3, 10.

all those texts, which shine in both Testaments, like stars of the first magnitude; and proclaim, as on the house top, that Christ is the Lord our righteousness, in the business of justification before God.

Such would do well to consider the history of free will, as it is recorded in the historical part of scripture. The greatest trial of free will, was the trial God made of it, in Lucifer, the son of the morning, and in all the non-elect among the angels; who, under his conduct, kept not their first estate, but soon left their first habitation; and, of bright and shining angels, are become infernal devils: Next to which was the trial God made of free will, in our first parents; from whom nothing was withheld, which became a bountiful Creator to bestow on so noble a creature as man; but how soon did man, left to the conduct of his own free will, lose all, and become bankrupt? Now if free will made no earnings of a covenant of works, got nothing by it in a state of innocency, but lost all; is it likely to recover all, on the foot of a covenant of works, in a state of sin and apostacy?

We may here consider, how man's will has been tried since the fall, and found to be no ways fit to be trusted. Was it not tried before the flood, when length of life, and strength of constitution, furnished

mankind with the greatest opportunities, to improve all the talents free will, as it is called, was intrusted with? But, instead of retrieving what it had lost, or of growing better, mankind grew worse and worse; “And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth; and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart, was only evil continually.” Free will so rebel’d, and was so provoking, as to bring down a deluge of water, in those early days, on mankind; as it will, in the end, bring a deluge of fire, even the general conflagration. It is very observable, and very humbling to consider, how free will, instead of acting the grateful, dutiful, obedient part, when Israel was so remarkably deliver’d out of Egypt, and led by such an high arm of power, through the red sea; murmur’d against God; called his power in question; talk’d of stoning Moses, and of returning back into Egypt; made a calf in Horeb, just before the burning mount, and to it ascribed all the praise of Israel’s deliverance. How did free will behave in Christ’s day, and in Christ’s family? In Christ’s day, in the persons of the Scribes and Pharisees, the priests and rulers; who, instead of receiving the Messiah with hearts enlarged in his praise, poured on him the

† Gen. vi. 5.

utmost contempt ; and though they wonder'd at the miracles wrought by him, yet they despised his person and character, and so they perished. And as free will acted a strange and most unaccountable part, in Christ's day, so it acted the basest part in Christ's family, in the person of Judas ; who, though he eat of his bread, saw all the miracles which were wrought by Christ, and heard the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth, lifted up his heel against him, sold him for thirty pieces of silver, and betray'd him with a kiss. This put the traytor upon being his own executioner ; prepared the halter he deserved, put it about his neck, and so dispatched him. In a word, all the sins that were ever acted on earth, are the birth of free will.

I shall next consider the Papists, who, the better to establish a justifying righteousness of their own, blend justification and sanctification together, and make a change of state to be one and the same thing with a change of nature : As if a traytor's becoming a loyal subject, and his being pardon'd, were one and the same ; whereas fact and experience prove them to be divers. They also destroy the oneness and compleatness of Christ's satisfaction, making a dreadful mixture in the laver of the sanctuary of their worthless tears with

Christ's most precious blood ; to which they add their unscriptural penances, pilgrimages, vows, and abstinences, which they esteem and preach up to be at least attoning, if not meritorious. Thus they place, in the room of Christ's suretyship righteousness, a righteousness of their own, made up of superstition, and will-worship; the worshipping of saints and angels; the respect they pay to the cross, and to all manner of relicks; their vespers and pater nosters; their works of super-erogation; and the merits and intercession of their many saints, with the virgin at the head of them. They tell us roundly, and without mincing the matter, that Christ has merited, that we may merit; so that Christ and his righteousness are but as the steps leading to the throne, on which carnal self is by them exalted; or as the scaffolds which they make use of in building Babel; by which, sorry as they are, they hope to mount the highest heaven. Thus doth Antichrist interfere with Christ in all his offices, that of a priest, as well as that of a king, and of a prophet.

I shall next consider the mistake of the Neonomians, who turn the gospel into a new remedial law, and make faith, repentance, and sincere obedience, to be the sinner's justifying righteousness before God. That God's saved ones are brought to re-
pent,

pent, and believe, and obey, is readily owned ; but as it is for the sake of Christ, and of his righteousness, that it is given to any to repent, to believe, and to obey ; so these things can no more be their justifying righteousness before God, than Christ can be divided against himself. So long as Christ is the Lord our righteousness, and is revealed in the gospel, as the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believes, nothing that is ours can share with him therein : Will he, who is to judge us, suffer himself to be thus supplanted by us ? Shall we receive, at the hand of Christ, a heart to repent, and believe, and obey, and then make a Christ of it ? The grace that gave Christ for us, and gives Christ to us, cannot be so mistaken, as to teach any to establish a justifying righteousness of their own.

I shall next consider the error of the Quakers ; who ignorantly, to say no worse of them, make a Christ of the light of nature, and a gospel of the law of nature ; whose justifying righteousness is made up of moral duties ; such as are taught not by the word of God, but by the light within. Thus they mistake the light of the moon for that of the sun, as if the moon could make the day, or ripen the harvest. The light and law of nature have their use, of which Cornelius is the top instance that we meet

meet with in scripture ; and yet to Cornelius this message is sent : “ Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter ; who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved ^s.” One would have thought that Cornelius, whose prayer was heard, and whose alms were had in remembrance in the sight of God, had been in a pardoned, justified, reconciled state ; especially upon that saying of Peter’s : “ Of a truth, I perceive that God is no respecter of persons ; but, in every nation, he that fears him, and works righteousness, is accepted of him.” And yet the message the apostle Peter was sent to him about, was to tell him words whereby he and his house should be saved. From which we may safely gather, that how commendable soever morality and natural religion are in themselves, and how much soever God may approve of them, as beyond all doubt he does, they cannot supply the place of Christ : If they could, Christ might have been spared, and a Plato, or a Seneca, have supplied the room of a Peter, or an apostle Paul.

I shall, in the last place, mention the error of the Antinomians ; where I shall shew who and what the true Antinomians are ; for all are not so who are so nick-

^s Acts xi. 13, 14.

named by the enemy: The apostle Paul was so called in his day, and so was Christ; and thus are many of Christ's faithful ministers called in our dark day, for preaching no other doctrine than that contained in my text. True Antinomians are either speculative or practical: Speculative are such as endeavour to persuade themselves, and others, that sin can do them no harm; that it shall not destroy nor damn the true believer, we readily own; but of the hurt it does them, they have less or more the experience, whenever they fall into sin; as David had, under the Old Testament, and the apostle Peter had, under the New. They likewise say, that God sees no sin in his people; none for which to condemn them, we readily grant; but that he sees sin in the best of them, to purge it out by his word, and by his rod, is what we affirm. They say farther, that believers are not to pray for the forgiveness of their daily sins; not distinguishing between that which is virtual, in the purpose of God, and in the purchase of Christ, and that which is actual, according to the word. It is not to be forgiven in purpose, or in purchase, that the believer prays; but to have purposed and purchased forgiveness, actually applied to him, according to the word. Their worst notion is, that believers are not under the law, as a rule of duty

duty to Christ ; but may live as they list, sin not being able to hurt them. I would hope that of these there are very few, if any, among Protestant Dissenters. Such would do well to remember, so as to copy after the apostle Paul ; who “ bewailed sin in its remains ^h ;” and desired to have it further mortified ⁱ ; and was under the law to Christ ^k. Practical Antinomians are those the apostle speaks of ; “ For many walk, of whom I have often told you, and now tell you, even weeping, that they are enemies to the cross of Christ ; whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things ^l.” These, it is to be fear’d, are many, and that their numbers are daily encreasing : They gather not honey and sweetness, with the bee, but, with the spider, poison from this flower of paradise, the doctrine of a sinner’s justification before God.

THE APPLICATION.

All the application I shall make is, to put you upon the enquiry how near this righteousness has been brought to you.

To the ear of all here present it has been brought, times without number, that is, in

^h Rom. vii. 24.
^l Phil. iii. 18.

ⁱ Phil. iii. 10. — ^k 1 Cor. ix. 21.

the sound of it, and into the head and memory in the notion of it: But has it been brought into your hearts in the love and liking of it? Do you, from and with the heart, begin to like, and choose, and prefer this way of a sinner's justification before God? His being made the righteousness of God in Christ, and so freed in that righteousness from all condemnation on the one hand, and his being entitled to eternal glory on the other: Of which it may be safely said, for it may be abundantly proved from scripture, that of all possible ways of a sinner's justification, this excels in glory; otherwise it could not be said, that therein God has abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence; "Wherein he has abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence^m;" which holds true as of the whole, so of every part of the salvation we have in and by the Lord Jesus Christ.

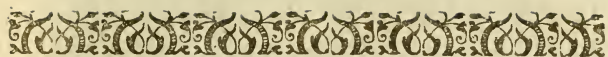
Has this righteousness been brought into your consciences, in the peace and comfort of it? Your spirits, it may be, are easy; but how came they so to be? If never disturbed and distressed for sin, it is a sad sign that their ease is from carnal security, and not from Christ. Or if the ease be such as they at Rome are full of,

^m Eph. i. 13.

who think, by their good works, both to atone and merit, it is so far from being Christ's peace, that it is Antichristian. But if it is founded on Christ's righteousness, received by faith, as your alone justifying righteousness ; if your hearts have been with Christ, as the Lord your righteousness, the gospel in both Testaments declares, that you are at peace with God, as being justified by faith.

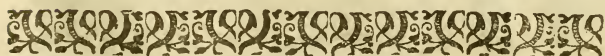
Do you evidence, that you have thus been with Jesus, both by your worship and by your walk ? Is the one spiritual, and the other circumspect ? Go astray you may like lost sheep ; but wallow in the mire of sin you cannot, like swine. The same grace that has changed your state, has renewed your hearts ; so that you are really dead to sin, but alive to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. There is not a doctrine in the gospel but it may be abused ; but a work of grace on the heart cannot ; that is like a running spring, which breaks through all opposition, and works out all filth.





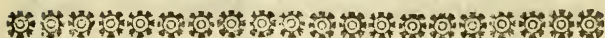
T H E
D O C T R I N E
O F
E F F I C A C I O U S G R A C E
A S S E R T E D and V I N D I C A T E D :
I N T W O
S E R M O N S.

BY *SAMUEL WILSON*,
Minister of the Gospel.





SERMON I.



PHILIP. ii. 13.

*It is God who worketh in you,
both to will and to do, of his
own good pleasure.*

IN the beginning of this chapter, the apostle recommends to the saints, at Philippi, mutual forbearance, affection, humility, and condescension, as the great ornament of the Christian character. To this end, he reminds them of their common fellowship of the Spirit, and their joint relation to, and interest in, the blessed Jesus; who, as he observes, in the days of his flesh, exemplified these graces, in a very distinguishing manner: So entirely was his heart set upon advancing his Fa-
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ther's honour, and so prevailing the affection which he bore to his people, that, "though he was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, yet he made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and, being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Now, says the apostle, you profess to be the disciples of this Jesus, you call him Lord; keep in view then his temper and conduct, and copy after him: "Let the same mind be in you that was in him;" and so much the rather give diligence herein, as I, who, when present with you, was serviceable, as an healer of your breaches, and an helper of your faith and joy, am now providentially removed from among you: "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obey'd, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." God is calling you to duty, diligence, and circumspection; give no occasion for the reproach, that your zeal declined upon my leaving you; but remember what is before you, a crown of immortal glory, and run with patience and constancy the race that is appointed you; and, in your way to the prize, let there be no other contention,

but

but who shall soonest reach the goal, and first lay hold of eternal life. And lest they should, conscious of their own spiritual impotence, be discouraged, he adds, "For it is God that worketh in you, &c." Your work, indeed, is great, your difficulties many; but if God is with you, he will give you a will, and furnish you with power, to perform what is acceptable to him.

Perhaps it will be said, that the words under consideration, relate to saints already renew'd in the spirit of their mind, and so cannot, with propriety, be produced as an argument for the necessity of a divine agency, in the conversion of a sinner. To this it might be answer'd, that it is no unusual thing, in theological enquiries, to borrow a passage of scripture, as an illustration, where it is not insisted on as a direct proof; but, in the instance before us, admitting it primarily may belong to believers, the consequence will be this, that either the sinner has more will to, and power for, that which is good, than the saint, or the same God, who works in the one, must also in the other, both to will and to do of his good pleasure. If a good man, who knows so much of his duty, who has been so long accustomed to the discharge of it, and so often tasted the sweets of communion with God, whilst

engaged in his service ; if in the midst of all his advantages, experience, and hope, he cannot of himself will or perform any thing that is spiritually good ; much less the sinner, whose heart is carnal, who is a slave to his lusts, and under the tyranny of the God of this world.

The word *ἐνεργῶν*, which we translate worketh, is expressive of power, yea, of mighty power ; it supposes a difficulty in the performance, and perfection or superior strength in the agent. It is not barely our setting our hand to a work, but the doing of it thoroughly, or to purpose. Accordingly, when the arm of the Lord is revealed, the sinner is born again, by the exceeding greatness of that power, whereby he subdues all things to himself : There is an energy on God's part, and a change on ours.

This working of the Almighty is farther described to us as internal : He worketh in us, and that both to will, as well as to do. Ministers preach to, but God worketh in us. The best of means, applied with the utmost skill, will not of themselves soften the hard, or cleanse the impure heart : God only has access to the spirits of men, so as to secure this desirable event, and he can do it on whom and when he pleases : for he worketh in us, of his own good pleasure ; a phrase which has in it the ideas of sovereignty, and of kindness. God
 2 gives

gives his grace at pleasure, to whom, and in what degree, he thinks fit, dividing to every man as he will : And as this grace is his own image, and leads on to the glorious enjoyment of himself, it must needs be a favour of inestimable value.

The words being explained, give us an occasion to observe,

That when a sinner is born again, there is a change wrought in his soul, by the mighty power of God.

By this change, I do not understand an alteration of profession or character barely ; for, as the apostle tells us, circumcision avails no more than uncircumcision, where the new creature is wanting. The change which we intend is real, not nominal, a change of the subject, not of the name only. A man may professedly renounce idolatry, submit to baptism, as a badge of Christianity, and attend the worship of God, in the assemblies of the saint, call himself, and be deemed by others, a believer ; and yet be a stranger to the change we are treating of. Again, we distinguish the grace of God in the renewing of a sinner, from reason, or the improvements of it, when its dictates are supposed to be duly attended to. Reason belongs to us as men, and is common to our nature, as raised above the beasts that perish : But this is not sufficient to make us wise unto

salvation. Where is the person of whom it may be said, that, after a course of sin and impiety, he brought himself, by bare reasoning, to forsake the evil of his way, to love the Lord his God with all his heart, to believe on the Lord Jesus, to worship God in the Spirit, and to persevere in these things unto the end? Experience tells us, that sin and Satan so entirely possess the sinner's heart, that there must be something more than the care and improvement of our reason to make room for Christ and holiness. Nor farther, do we mean, by this change, that which is merely the result of presenting certain truths to the understanding, in a strong and engaging light; so that whereas formerly they were either not at all, or very little, attended to by us, now we are brought, with proper application, to reflect and meditate on them, and so are, by deductions from them, engaged in the choice of virtue, and the hatred of vice. This, indeed, we allow to follow upon this change, as a fruit of it; but till the soul is spiritually enlighten'd, we suppose it to be incapable of judging aright of spiritual truths, or of forming practical conclusions from them.

In contradistinction to these accounts of regeneration, we assert, that it is the implanting of a principle of spiritual life, or the forming of the divine image in the soul,

soul, in which the soul it self, as to the substance of it, remains the same, but the qualities of it are alter'd; the understanding, from being darken'd, becomes light in the Lord; the will, which before was rebellious against God, is now brought into subjection to him; and the affections, which before were wholly carnal, and determined on sensual objects, are now purified and refined, and fixed on heavenly things. In a word, the change is real and universal, the power which effects it is divine, the fruits many and discernible, and the great efficient Jehovah the Spirit.

A particular account of the exact way in which the Spirit accomplishes this great work, is not to be expected, after our Lord has told us, that as "the wind bloweth where it listeth, and we hear the sound thereof, but cannot tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth, so is every one that is born of the Spirit^a:" so that we are to attend only to the proof of the fact; That what the scripture calls the new creature, or a principle of grace, is form'd or wrought in the soul by the power of God, in a way of efficacious grace. I choose to call it the new creature, as distinguishing between regeneration and conversion, the one being previous to, though

^a John iii. 8.

necessarily connected with the other. In regeneration, we are passive, and receive from God ; in conversion, we are active, and turn to him ; we repent, believe, and obey : but this supposes we have been his workmanship, and, by his power, have been renewed in the spirit of our mind.

Here I shall, in some measure, pursue the very same method which a late celebrated writer ^b, on the other side of the question, admits to be just, and which he therefore keeps in view, in all his reasoning on the subject ; and so begin,

I. With those arguments which may be taken from the scripture account of the work it self, which is represented to us in such terms, as lead us necessarily to conclude, that the soul is passive in it, and that it is brought about by the arm of the Almighty. Thus, 1. The apostle tells us, “ If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature ^c.” And again, “ Neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature ^d :” And so we are said to be God’s workmanship, created ; and yet more expressly, the new man is said to be created after God in righteousness, and true holiness ^e. I don’t find it disputed whether these passages re-

^b Dr. Whitby.

^c 2 Cor. v. 17.

^d Gal. vi. 15.

^e Eph. iv. 24.

fer to the subject before us ; and if they do, it must be allowed, that either the metaphor is ill chosen, and wrongly applied, or it must be expressive of the same power in the new birth, with that which was exerted in creation, or the making of something out of nothing.

To ^f this it is objected, that the term, Create, does not always suppose the persons or things said to be created, to be wholly passive, or the power to be so great as we pretend ; for God is said to create and form the church of the Jews^g ; which must be understood of their stipulating with God, as well as of his engagements to them ; in which their covenanting with him they were active. To this we answer, it is certain, whether the phrase is to be understood in a natural or political sense, it stands connected with two other instances of God's goodness, (viz. redeeming them, and calling them by their name) in which they had no concern, but what was purely passive : And, if we consider how often God upbraids that people with their breach of covenant, it will not so well agree with the design of the place, which is evidently their encouragement, that this circumstance should be introduced, which must necessarily affect them with shame and fear. I cannot but think there was

^f See Dr. Whitby, Pag. 272.

^g Isai. xliii. 1.

so much sovereignty in God's choosing Abraham, and so much power in his raising his family, from so small a beginning, to be so great a people, as might abundantly justify the prophet in the use of the terms Create and Form, without having any regard to their promisory or covenant engagements.

It is farther objected ^h, against this argument, that God is said to create that which he brings into a new and better state: Thus David prays; "Create in me a clean heart ⁱ;" and God is said to create new heavens, and a new earth, and to create Jerusalem a rejoicing ^k. As to the case of David, it is plain, his fall had so far convinced him of the plague of his own heart, that he despairs of healing it himself, and therefore cries to God, "Create in me a clean heart." It might be a doubt with him, very probably, after so dreadful a back-sliding, whether he had ever been truly converted; and if so much power, as would justify the expression, was necessary for his recovery, we may easily conclude what is needful for the renewing of a sinner, wholly dead in trespasses and sins. As for the other passage mentioned, what difficulty so ever may

^h Dr. Whitby, Pag. 273.
lv. 17, 19.

ⁱ Psal. li. 10.

^k Isai.

attend settling the exact meaning of it, the following expressions, in the chapter, abundantly warrant the use of the metaphor; for, according to the prophet, “there is then to be no more an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days, for the child shall die an hundred years old; the wolf and the lamb are to feed together, and the lion to eat straw like a bullock;” events altogether supernatural and miraculous. As to the Greek fathers speaking of the new creature as a change for the better only, if it should be allowed that this is their sentiment, I do not see how it affects the argument; for the question is not whether the change is for the better, but what power is necessary to it, and to whom it is to be refer’d, to God or the creature.

2. Another scripture representation of regeneration, is that of our being quicken’d by the great God, when dead in sins¹: And what the power is, whereby we are quicken’d, the apostle tells us^m; “that ye may know what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us ward, who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead:” Whatever may be the fact the apostle has in view,

¹ Eph. ii. 1, 5.

^m Chap. i. 18, 19.

the terms are as strong and expressive, as language will admit. Great pains are taken, by our opponentsⁿ, in expounding this place of the resurrection of the body, in the last day, which they allow to be a work of almighty power; but it is impossible to prove this to be the meaning of it, because there is not a word of the resurrection of the saints in the text. The natural meaning of the place is evidently this: The apostle prays that God would enlighten them into that mystery of mercy, the work of faith in their souls, begun and carried on by the same power, which raised his Son from the dead; and whereas he speaks of those who did believe, it is to acquaint them, that faith, in the exercise and increase, is from the divine power, as well as in the first principle.

How far this power is consistent with scripture exhortations and persuasions, will be consider'd in its place.

3. We are said, in scripture, to be born from above, to be born of God, and not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. In regeneration, the agency is removed from the creature, and ascribed to the great Creator.

To this it is objected^o, that we are said to be begotten by the word of the living

ⁿ Dr. Whitby, Pag. 274.

^o Dr. Whitby, *ibid*.

God, and that faith comes by hearing; and the apostle tells the Corinthians, he begot them by his gospel; which must, say our opponents, be understood in a way of moral suasion, and not in that supernatural, all-powerful way we contend for. To this we reply, that though faith comes by hearing, yet it is not of our selves; it is the gift of God. Ministers preach, and whilst they preach, and with their preaching, God works, and so it is that men are turn'd unto him; otherwise even a Paul may plant, and an Apollos water, but there will be no encrease; for, as the apostle observes, they are only ministers, by whom we believe; "neither is he that planteth any thing, nor he that watereth, but God that giveth the encrease:" So that we conclude the metaphors, which the scripture makes use of, in representing the renewing of a sinner, carry in them plain notices of a divine interposure, and that in a way of infinite and almighty power. And to understand them otherwise, is to charge the Holy Spirit with what is allowed to be a blemish in all writers, the using of words without meaning, or of figures widely distant from, and disproportionate to the subject.

II. If we consider the scripture account of the sinner before this change passes upon

Of Efficacious Grace.

on him, it will serve as a farther proof of the necessity of efficacious grace, in our being born again.

1. We are said to be dead in trespasses and sins^p; that is, by reason of sin, to be altogether impotent to that which is good. As the organs of the body at death cease to perform their usual functions, so the un-renewed sinner is without God, and without Christ, in the world; he is lost to his duty, and estranged from every thing that is spiritually good.

To this it is objected^a, that common convictions, especially where they are strong, prove that the sinner, even before conversion, is not void of all sense, as a dead body is; so that the argument, according to us, if it proves any thing, proves, say they, too much. To this we answer, that all convictions are originally from God, and the sinner, under the great fear of punishment, may have no apprehension of the excellency of his duty, *nor* any spiritual desire after communion with God: Witness Judas, who, though he had an hell in his conscience, was utterly a stranger to the grace of God.

It is farther objected, that the places cited concern only the Gentile world, held under the government of Satan, but have

^p Eph. ii. 1. Col. ii. 13. ^a Dr. Whitby, Pag. 276.

no relation to the proselytes of justice, much less to the Jew, and least of all to the baptized Christian. To this it is sufficient to reply, that the apostle was quite of another mind, or he would not have said "among whom we all had our conversation in times past;" and, in another epistle, where he is professedly considering the difference between Jew and Gentile, he says; "What then, are we better than they? no, in no wise; for we have before proved, both Jew and Gentile, that they are all under sin;" and therefore he uses that phrase to the church of Corinth, after an enumeration of the greatest sinners, "such were some of you." And he puts himself into the number, in what he says to Titus; "For we our selves also were sometime foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts." Now it will easily be granted, that the apostle, before his conversion, was restrained from grosser sins; none suppose that he run into all excess of riot, but had escaped the pollutions, which were in the world through lust; and if that is allowed, it will be difficult to assign a reason why he should thus put himself into the number of the chief of sinners, if there had not been something common to them

† Rom. iii. 9.

† I Cor. vi. 11.

all ; I mean, an impotence to good, and a propensity to evil.

2. A farther account, which the scripture gives us, of our condition before conversion, is, that our understanding is darken'd ; that we are alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in us, because of the blindness of our hearts^t ; yea, we are said to be darkness^v : And the apostle tells us ; “ The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him ; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned^w ;” so that if we are made wise to salvation, God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, must, in the same way, and by the same power, enlighten our understandings, to give us the knowledge of his glory, as it shines in the Person of his Son^x. Till this is the case, the gospel, tho' in it self the wisdom of God, will be accounted foolishness^y.

As to what is objected, that these passages only describe the case of the wilfully blind, who love darkness rather than light, we answer, they are evidently deliver'd in too general terms to admit of such an interpretation ; yea, we are expressly told, “ there is none righteous, no, not one ;”

^t Eph. iv. 18.

^v Ver. 8.

^w 1 Cor. ii. 14.

^x 2 Cor. iv. 6.

^y 1 Cor. i. 23, 24.

“ There

“ There is none that understands; there is none that seeks after God ^z. ”

3. Another argument may be taken from our Lord’s words; “ No man can come unto me, except the Father, who hath sent me, draw him ^a. ” By coming to Christ, we understand receiving him, or believing in him: By the Father’s drawing, his work of power upon the heart of a sinner, when he is brought to Christ. Now without this, says our Lord, no man can come unto me; not the wise and prudent, the learned or ingenious, any more than the ignorant and illiterate, the obstinate and rebellious: The event is alike impossible to them all; no man can come, except the Father draw him.

To this it is objected ^b, that, if this is the case, there is nothing praise-worthy in our faith, or blame-worthy in our unbelief; since when God draws, there is no resisting; and where he is not pleased to do it, we cannot move, in a spiritual sense. To this we answer: It is as true, that, before conversion, we will not, as that we cannot come to Christ: Though we may not be condemned for a mere impossibility of believing, yet we may very justly, for strengthening our selves in our prejudices against

^z Rom. iii. 10, 11. Pag. 280.

^a John vi. 44.

^b Dr. Whitby,

Christ, and the way of salvation by him. That the scripture expressly tells us, faith is not of our selves, it is the gift of God ; and yet we are required to believe. Nor do I see any such contradiction in some mens being judicially, as a punishment for their sins, shut up in unbelief, and their condemnation for loving darkness, rather than light.

Again^c, it is objected, that this drawing of the Father is to be understood only or principally of God's perswading, and prevailing upon us to come to Christ, by the consideration of the miracles, or mighty works, which were done by him, as an evidence of his being the Messiah, and by the promise of eternal life upon our coming. To this we answer, that supposing (though we can by no means allow it) this were the genuine sense of the place, we might urge it, as an argument in the case before us ; for if we cannot, but as taught of God, consider the nature and evidence of Christ's miracles, which are barely facts, supposed to be done by him, in confirmation of his mission, much less can we, without a divine interposure, renounce our darling corruptions, quit our most beloved iniquities, and heartily embrace Jesus, as our Saviour and our King. In short, the

^c Dr. Whitby, Pag. 280, 281.

tree must first be made good, before it can produce any good fruit ; for the carnal mind, whilst it continues so, is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be ^d.

III. Our next general head of argument is taken from God's challenging this work as his own, speaking of it as performed by him, and in such terms, as manifestly exclude the creatures agency: Thus we read ; " The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed ; to love the Lord thy God, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul ^e." This is thus explained by the prophet Ezekiel ; " I will give them one heart, and I will put a new Spirit within you, and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them an heart of flesh, that they may walk in my statutes ^f." A like promise we have in these words ; " Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean. From all your idols will I cleanse you ; a new heart also will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you ; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh ; and I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes ^g." And so the

^d Rom. viii. 7. ^e Deut. xxx. 6. ^f Ezek. xi. 19, 20.
^g Chap. xxxvi. 26, 27, 28.

prophet Jeremiah, giving an account of the new covenant, does it in these terms ; “ This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel ; after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts ; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people ^h : ” And more fully in the following words ; “ I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever ⁱ. ” Now, can it be thought that, by all these expressions, God intends no more than that he will assist and succeed our endeavours to renew and convert our selves ? Is this the meaning of his putting his Spirit within us ? Of his taking the stone out of the heart, and giving an heart of flesh ? Why does he promise so often, I will do this for you, if the work were divided between him and us ? So that, according to the language of the Old Testament, we are to expect renewing grace from God, as his own proper work.

To this it is objected ^k, that the passages mentioned out of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, refer to the Jews in the end of the world, and therefore are wrongly produced in the question before us. To this we answer ; that if that be the case, it proves however

^h Jer. xxxi. 33.
 Pag. 291.

ⁱ Chap. xxxii. 39.

^k Dr. Whitby,

their conversion will be of God. Besides, these promises contain blessings, which are inseparable from salvation, and what every saint is in the experience of.

The apostle, in his epistle to the Hebrews ¹, quotes them, and applies them to Christ, as the surety of this covenant, and so uses this as an argument of the superior excellency of the gospel, above the Jewish dispensation, that the covenant is better, established upon better promises; which would have been foreign to his design, if it relates only to the recovery of the Jews, in the end of the world.

In the New Testament we read, that God open'd the heart of Lydia ^m; that faith is not of our selves, it is his gift ⁿ: He gives it to some to believe; he must draw, or there will be no coming to Christ ^o. Paul preaches and prays, but God open'd Lydia's heart; he must prepare the heart for the seed, and cause the seed to take root, and to bring forth fruit to his glory: And therefore the apostle distinguishes between the gospel, and the power that renders it successful; "Our gospel came to you, not in word only, but also in power ^p." Life and immortality are, indeed, brought to light by the gospel; but God only can

¹ Heb. viii. 8, &c

^m Acts xvi. 14.

ⁿ Eph. ii. 8.

² John vi. 44.

^p 1 Thess. i. 5.

make it unto us a favour of life unto life ; and this he does, when he makes it his power unto salvation. But to proceed,

IV. Another argument for the efficacy of the grace of God in regeneration, may be taken from this consideration : That supposing infants are polluted and defiled, in consequence of what we call original sin, as many of these as die before the actual exercise of reason, must either be renewed by the immediate hand of God, or be excluded from salvation ; since our Lord has told us, “ Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God^a ;” nor will it be disputed, that without habitual holiness, at least, no man can see the Lord. As for infants, we take it for granted, in the present argument, that they are conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity ; that that which is born of the flesh, is flesh ; that they are, by reason of the disobedience of the first man, sinners, and so unworthy of and unmeet for the heavenly glory, and must be excluded from it, unless wash’d in the blood of Jesus, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit. To suppose them all, or indeed any of them, to perish, is to be cruelly wise above what is written ; and to imagine they are so holy, as to need no

^a John iii. 3.

cleansing, or that any thing defiled can enter into heaven, is directly flying in the face of scripture: so that though we are not told positively what is their portion, yet we may safely determine that they are made meet, if in heaven, for that inheritance, which is incorruptible and undefiled. And, if this is the case, we cannot suppose they contribute any thing to it themselves; it must be from the abundant mercy and powerful grace of a compassionate God. Now, can it be thought that persons grown to years of maturity, who have for a great while accustomed themselves to do evil, and whose vicious habits are hereby confirmed and enlarged, will be more easily wrought upon? It is true, they have some degrees of reason and conscience; but as these are in the service of sin, the byass will be ever to evil, till it is alter'd by the grace of God. If it should be said, secret things belong to God; and, as he has not expressly told us what will be the final state of infants, no argument can be fairly drawn from premises, which are in themselves uncertain: We answer, no more is intended by it, than what will be easily granted by those who allow the doctrine of original sin; and where this is denied, we agree it is of no force.

We might now produce some eminent instances of the grace of God, in the re-

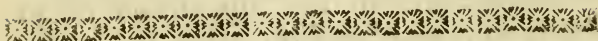
newing of sinners, as they stand recorded in scripture; from which we may conclude, that in their case, however, the happy change was from God, and the immediate effect of his almighty power. Thus, in the story of Zacheus, it does not appear that our Lord said any more to him than this: "Make haste and come down, to day I must abide at thine house". Yet presently a change was wrought in his soul, and the fruits of it appear'd in an ingenuous confession of his former iniquities, and, in an humble resolution to pursue the contrary paths of justice and mercy. Now what can this, so great and sudden an alteration, be attributed to, but the powerful influence which the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ had upon his mind? We cannot suppose there was an opportunity for a great deal of discourse or reasoning with him; but if there was, we may easily judge how far words alone are sufficient to engage a rigorous oppressor in acts of righteousness and mercy; so that, from the effects, we may judge of the cause, and conclude, that so great a change could not have been made at once upon such an heart, but by the same power, whereby God is able to subdue all things to himself. Another instance, which might be mentioned,

is that of Saul, who was not profelyted to Christianity under a sermon, or at a religious conference ^f, but when his mind was under the strongest and most settled prejudice against it; when his zeal in persecuting the church was highten'd into a kind of fury or madness; under these unpromising circumstances, he is made to hear the voice of the Son of God, and live; and, in the humble language of a disciple, to say; "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" instead of going on, as he had designed, in making havock of the church. We might add the case of the thief on the cross, who either went to heaven without holiness, or he received it immediately from that Jesus, who said to him; "This day thou shalt be with me in paradise ^t." If it is said these are extraordinary cases; we answer, whatever difference there may be in the circumstances of sinners, the power is the same in the renewing of them all; for the enmity which is in every sinner's heart against Christ and holiness, can only be removed by an act of omnipotence.

^f Acts ix.^t Luke xxiii. 39, &c.

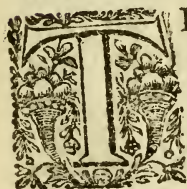


S E R M O N II.



PHILIP. ii. 13.

*It is God who worketh in you,
both to will and to do, of his
own good pleasure.*



THE doctrine which we endeavoured to state and establish, in the preceding discourse, was to this effect: That when a sinner is born again, there is a mighty change wrought in his soul, by the efficacious working of the Holy Ghost. His being quicken'd, and made spiritually alive, is the effect of God's power, which works in him, as well to will, as to do, of his own good pleasure. This we attempted to prove, from the scripture representations of the work it self, in which it is called, a
new

new creation, a resurrection, and a being born again ; terms expressive of power ; in the exertion of which, the Almighty is, and cannot but be alone, and the creature manifestly passive. Again, we observed, from the said infallible oracles, that the state of man, before this change passes upon him, is such, as will by no means admit of the supposition of an ability to renew himself ; since he is described as dead in trespasses and sins, having his understanding darken'd, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in him, because of the blindness of his heart ; inasmuch as he is said to be darkness it self ; and it is affirm'd of him, that he receives not the things of the Spirit of God, but accounts them foolishness. On these accounts, our Lord might well say, “ that no man can come unto me, except the Father, who hath sent me, draw him.” Farther, we observed, that God challenges this work as his own, and speaks of it in the Old and New Testament, as brought about by his power ; and the promises which he has made, concerning it, conclude him to be equal to the work, as well as gracious to his chosen ; and are as entirely silent, as to the agency, as they exclude and set aside the merit, of the creature. Moreover, we hinted that this must be the

case

case with infants dying before the exercise of reason, supposing them to be under the pollution of original sin, unless we exclude them all from salvation. If they are regenerated, it cannot be in a way of moral suasion, but of internal and almighty efficacy.

We proceed now to another consideration, to prove the necessity of efficacious grace, in the renewing of a sinner; and that may be taken,

V. From the difficulty of the work, as it consists in conquering the strongest prejudices, mortifying the most corrupt habits, and in the implanting of a principle of grace and holiness, to which the sinner is entirely averse; and, in opposition to which, Satan, who maintains the throne in his heart, uses his utmost endeavours. There is a greater distance betwixt the terms, sin and holiness, corruption and grace, than between those of something and nothing. In creation, something is form'd out of nothing; but in regeneration, (as one strongly expresses it) hell is changed into heaven. In creation, there is no assistance, but then there is no opposition; but regeneration is like the stemming of a rapid stream, and turning it into a contrary course; in which as there is nothing to help, so there is every thing to hinder.

The sinner is not barely destitute of the divine image, and without strength for the performance of what is good; but “every imagination of the thoughts of his heart, is evil continually^a:” He is so far from the fear of the Lord, and any concern about communion with him, that the language of his heart unto God is; “Depart from me; I desire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty that I should serve him? and what profit should I have if I pray unto him^b?” And, whilst he is wilfully pursuing a course of rebellion, and strengthening and enlarging his vitious habits, we may well ask, with the prophet, “Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then, and not till then, may the sinner, who has been accustomed to do evil, learn to do well^c.” Can any created finite power, at once, in a moment, change the fierceness of a devouring lion into the meekness of a lamb? If this calls for omnipotence, how much more, to reduce the stout-hearted sinner, who is far from righteousness, to the obedience of faith, and a delight in the law of the Lord after the inward man. Go and try the experiment, treat with the rebel, who, for a course of years, has had pleasure in unrighteousness, whose heart is in

^a Gen. vi. 5.^b Job xxi. 14.^c Jer. xiii. 23.

league with Satan, and strongly attached to sin ; use the most moving and persuasive arguments to convince him of the folly of his way : See whether he will be brought, by all your reasoning, to quit his darling lusts, and walk in the ways of the Lord ; no, after all your advice, though mingled with tears, he loves his idols, and after them will he go. Satan has such an interest in the hearts of the children of disobedience ; he leads them captive to that degree, that none but the Almighty can dispossess him, and break the chain ; and therefore, when the apostle is speaking of this mercy, he uses a word strongly expressive of power ; “ Giving thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light : who hath deliver’d us from the power of darkness, *ἐξουσία*, hath snatch’d us out of the power or hand of the devil, and translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son ^d.”

An excellent and most judicious divine ^e has a passage pertinent to our purpose, in his discourse on regeneration : “ The new birth, says he, is a change of nature ; of a nature, where there was as little of spiritual good, as there was of being in nothing before the creation. It is a change of a

^d Col. i. 12, 13.

^e Mr. Charnock, Vol. II. p. 208.

stone into flesh, of a heart, that, like a stone, hath hardness and settledness of sinful parts, a strong resistance against any instrument, an incorporation of sin and lust with its very nature; where the heart and sin, self and sin, are cordially one and the same. None can change such a nature but the God of all grace. No man can change the nature of the meanest creature in the world: Now, to see a lump of vice become the model of virtue; he that drank in iniquity like water, to thirst after righteousness, to crucify his darling flesh, to be weary of the poison he loved, for the purity he hated, speaks a supernatural grace, transcendently attractive, and powerfully operative." So that, as he somewhere else observes, "We have no reason to wonder that creation is only ascribed to the hand of God, when, in regeneration, his arm is supposed to be revealed." But to proceed,

VI. If we consider the different success of the gospel, as dispensed by several persons, or by the same person, at different times; it will be evident, that there must be the power of God attending it, or it will not be successful to salvation, or prove a favour of life unto life. Peter's hearers, and those to whom Stephen minister'd, appear to be equally ignorant of, and alike pre-

prejudiced against the gospel ; the apostles deliver themselves with the same plainness and faithfulness, upon the subject of the guilt contracted, by shedding the innocent blood of the Son of God : Three thousand are converted, baptized, and added to the church, from a single sermon, deliver'd by Peter ; whereas Stephen's hearers blaspheme and stone him. Paul again finds hearts and houses open to him, in one city, and is obliged to escape for his life in another.

Now how can this be accounted for, but upon the apostle's principle, " Neither is he that planteth any thing, nor he that watereth, but God that gives the increase ?" Nay, how common is it for the same person, who has, perhaps, for years, sat unmoved under the ministry of a learned, faithful, and affectionate preacher, at length in the day of God's power, under means far less likely to answer the end, to be awakened, convinced, and renewed ? And are there not many instances of persons, of the same family, education and advantages, attending the same means, and one is taken, and he perhaps the most profane or obstinate, and the rest left to a bare outside profession, or an hypocritical formality ? Why should the same gospel, in one hand, thus run and be glorified, and, in another, no less valuable, be a favour of

death unto death? Why should the same preacher, at one time, see of the travel of his soul to his satisfaction; at another time have occasion to complain, Who has believed our report? If the weapons of our warfare were mighty in themselves, why not equally, and at all times, successful? But the event makes it evident, they are only so through God; and when his power is put forth, he can easily, and he only can, bring down every high thought and imagination, and reduce the stubborn hearts of rebellious sinners to a subjection to himself.

VII. Another argument for the efficiency of the grace of God in regeneration, may be taken from the consideration of the concern which God has in the whole world. If we reflect on the various parts of the creation, we shall find that, in the vegetable, animal, rational, and intellectual world, all first or natural principles are derived from God; and the actual exercise of those principles, whatever concurrent circumstances may attend, is constantly under his providential influence: And is this the case in universal nature? And can we suppose that in regeneration, one of the noblest works of God, he is left out, as having little or no concern? How strange, how unaccountable, would this be?

Our natural philosophers readily allow, that every thing that is necessary for the growth and improvement of vegetables, is from God; that he, as the great Author of nature, has given it to the seed, to receive the fatning influence of the earth, the moisture of the rain, and the enlivening genial rays of the sun: Nor will they dispute the sun it self had never been what it now is, the great fountain of light and heat, to the universe, but by the will and power of the Creator. They will tell you, the rain descends at his appointment, and that he orders and determines its extent and usefulness; that there is an equal display of his power, wisdom, and goodness, in the growth of the grass, in the flourishing of plants, and the increase of corn: All is from him, and under the immediate influence of his providence. Moreover, in the animal world, or among the beasts of the field, the fowls of the air, or the fish in the sea, they will allow a principle of life and motion is from God, and the actual exercise of it in a dependance upon him. What we call sometimes instinct, or nature in them, is confessedly not of themselves, but from him, who hath appointed their situation in the order of creatures, and furnished them with all their powers, sensations, and appetites: Whence they are directed to collect their proper

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food,

food, and reject what would be hurtful or destructive to them. And none but an atheistic sceptic will deny but that, in the rational world, we have our souls, with all their capacities of reasoning, reflection, judgment, and memory from God ; that he made us, by his power, and continues us by his providence, wiser than the beasts of the field, and of more understanding than the fowls of the air : And who will not allow that the angels, creatures of the highest order, have all their intellectual powers from God ? Now, shall we admit that every creature hath its being from, and lives, and moves, and acts in a dependance upon the glorious Creator ; and suppose that the saint receives a principle of grace from himself, and continues a believer, by the strength of his own reasoning, and the vigour and constancy of his own resolution ? Is it from God that I am a reasonable thinking creature ? and from my self that I am a Christian, holy and spiritual ? Am I not sufficient for the least action in common life, but as upheld by his power, and under the influence of his providence ? And will it be said, I can renew my self, and cleave to the Lord, with full purpose of heart, by my own strength ? What is this but to allow a dependance in the less, and to deny it in the greater ? What Adam
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possessed in paradise, as to the perfection of his nature, the felicity he enjoy'd, and his power to serve, worship, and adore his Creator, he had confessedly from him who made him, after his own image. Now, if the first impress of the divine likeness on his soul, was the produce of God's wisdom and power; certainly the restoring that image, when lost or impair'd, can be no less the work of the Almighty. If the care and skill of an artificer is requisite to the first making of a machine, or any curious piece of work; it must be equally necessary to the repair of it, when its principal springs are broke, and every thing out of order. But we go on,

VIII. To consider the gross absurdities which manifestly attend the denying the efficacy of the grace of God in regeneration; as,

1. This would be to furnish Christians with an easy and ready answer to that question of the apostle; "Who made thee to differ from another? What hast thou, that thou didst not receive? Now, if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" Such a one might boldly reply, upon the scheme of our opponents, my own reflection and judg-

§ 1 Cor. iv. 7.

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ment;

ment; my reason and choice made me to differ: The means were, indeed, the same, what I enjoy'd in common with others; but the success was the effect of my own care, diligence, and attention, whilst they miss'd of it through their own heedlessness and carnality. It is objected to this^s, that the apostle is here speaking of gifts only, and of such as were miraculously and immediately infused, without human industry, and confer'd on the primitive Christians, without any co-operation of their own faculties: So that as this kind of ministration of the Spirit has, for a great while, ceased in the church, an argument cannot fairly be drawn from it, in our enquiries about the mere standing and ordinary dispensations of it. To this we answer, that, admitting the apostle is speaking of gifts, renewing grace is undoubtedly one of those gifts, and not the least valuable of them, which came down from the Father of lights; for when we are born again, it is not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God; and we are no more to ascribe to our own agency the difference between us and others in the gift of grace, than the apostles, or primitive Christians, could in the miraculous endowments which were bestowed up-

^s Dr. Whitby, Pag. 296.

on them. Moreover, is it not evident that the difference between a sinner and a saint is a great deal more, both in the nature and consequence of it, than between a person possessed of gifts, and one who is destitute of them? Gifts are useful to others, but grace prepares for heaven; gifts may obtain and enlarge a reputation among men, but grace only disposes for an intimacy with God here, and the enjoyment of him hereafter. Is it God who makes the difference in the one, and man in the other? The apostle determines how it was in his own case; "And last of all, says he, speaking of our Lord Jesus Christ, he was seen of me, as one born out of due time; for I am the least of the apostles, and am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God; but, by the grace of God, I am what I am^h." The alteration is marvelous, the change surprizing, from an enemy to a friend, from a persecuter to a preacher; but I ascribe it not to my self, but to the grace of God; and this grace, which was bestowed upon me, was not in vain: So far from it, that under its influence "I labour'd more abundantly than they all;" and so fearful was he, lest God should

^h 1 Cor. xv. 8, 9. 10.

not have all the glory, that he adds, "Yet not I, but the grace of God, which was with me."

2. Another absurdity which attends the denying of the grace of God in regeneration, is its contradicting and opposing the general design of God in salvation, which is, that no flesh should glory in his sight, but that he who glorieth, should glory in the Lord. That doctrine which gives the creature room to boast, that his own arm, either in the whole or in part, brought him salvation, cannot be of God. If our will is to give the turning point, and the balance is placed in our own hands; and, after all the provision which God hath made, and the pains he is supposed to be at, the creature is himself to determine the matter by his own choice or refusal; to be sure, the honour ought to go with the agency. And of this our opponents seem to be so sensible, that some of them allow that it is of preventing grace that we will and choose what is good, and refuse what is evil; of assisting grace, that we are enabled to perform that will, and persist in that choice; and of mercy, when we have done all, that we are accepted; a way of expressing themselves, not a little contradictory to their scheme, and which, at other times, they are far from being fond of.

of. It is objected ⁱ, that glorying, or boasting, in some instances, is not unlawful: That the apostle was found in the practice himself, and declares, with a good deal of vehemency, that “it were better he should die, than any man make void his glorying;” and that elsewhere he speaks of rejoicing or boasting in the testimony of a good conscience. To this we answer; it must be proved, before the objection will be of any force, that the apostle is speaking in those places of the grace of God in regeneration; whereas, in the one, he is speaking of the high opinion he had of the gospel, in opposition to the contempt it met with from an ungodly world; and in the other, of the fruits, not of the principle of grace, which fruits he ascribes to a divine influence, when he says, “Not by fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God,” he and the rest of the saints had their conversation in the world: And where is the inconsistency of this with that general direction; “Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, nor let the mighty man glory in his might: Let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, which exercises loving kindness, judgment, and

ⁱ Dr. Whitby, Pag. 299.

righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord ^k.”

3. Another absurdity arising from the supposition of the creature's agency, in his own regeneration, is, that it would then be uncertain whether any would be renew'd at all, very possible that none might, and, all circumstances consider'd, absolutely impossible that any should. Suppose the best external evidence were produced, and the most weighty arguments made use of, if the issue depends upon the will of man, and that will be as liable to refuse as to choose, the event must needs be uncertain, till the creature has determined; nor could it be certainly known, were this the case, whether any one would determine right: But, if the scripture account of man, before conversion, may be depended upon, if he is dead in trespasses, darkness, and enmity against God; his will, being averse to good, and prone to evil, would necessarily determine in favour of sin, and in a rejection of holiness. One would have thought, that when the apostle Paul came to Athens, the seat of learning, the wise men of that place would have patiently heard what he had to offer, and duly weigh'd and consider'd the nature and importance of his doctrine, and that at

^k Jer. ix. 23, 24.

least the major part of them would have embraced the gospel evidence, which attended it. But, instead of this, we find that he met with more success in Corinth, a city remarkably dissolute and wicked, than he did among the learned philosophers of Athens; and, upon his attempt to reclaim the Athenians from their gross superstition and idolatry, they mocked and derided him, as a base fellow, and rejected the doctrine of salvation, as foolish and irrational. So true is it what our Lord said, that “these things are hid from the wise and prudent, and revealed unto babes; neither can flesh or blood reveal them to us, but our Father who is in heaven.”

We shall now enquire whether the grace of God, in the renewing of a sinner, may be frustrated, or set aside, by the opposition of the creature. And here we are to remember it is God’s work, and therefore must be perfect, since he can and will do all his pleasure. To say that he cannot, though he would, change the sinner’s heart, by an immediate act of his own power, is to challenge his omnipotence: So that the question is not whether God can do this, or no? but whether it is worthy of him, and how far it is really the case? And this may be determined,

I. From the inviolable and inseparable connection of the several parts of that golden
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den chain mention'd by the apostle ; “ For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called ; and whom he called, them he also justified ; and whom he justified, them he also glorified¹ ;” that is, as many as are ordained unto eternal life, either are, or shall be called and sanctified by the grace of God, as their meetness for it, and be justified by the righteousness of Christ, as their title to it, as well as, at length, be glorified in the enjoyment of it : accordingly we are expressly said to be chosen unto holiness^m. Now, if the purpose of God, in election, is supposed to stand, then those whom he thus loved, with an everlasting love, shall be effectually drawn by the cords of it, agreeably to what our Lord says ; “ All that the Father giveth me, shall come unto me ; and him that cometh, I will in no wise cast out.”

2. This may be farther argued, from the purchase which our Lord, by the merit of his obedience and death, has made of his people, with respect to their present safety, and future felicity. The scripture represents him not only as redeeming them from wrath, when he died for their offences, but as purchasing them to himself,

¹ Rom. viii. 29, 30.

^m Eph. i. 4.

as having a fulness of grace for their supply in this world, and as having obtained a glorious inheritance for them in the other. Accordingly, in the prospect of his approaching death, he prays, first, that "they might be sanctified through the truth, and be kept from the evil one;" and then adds, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold the glory which thou hast given meⁿ." Grace and glory are, indeed, blessings altogether unmerited by the saint; but they are due to his surety, upon an engagement on the Father's part in the counsel of peace to the Son, that if he would make his soul an offering for sin, he should have a seed to serve him, and see of the travel of his soul to his satisfaction. Now our Lord Jesus Christ having done his part, to the abundant satisfaction of the Father, which was declared in his resurrection and session at his right hand; it would be unfaithful in the Father, and contrary to mutual stipulations, if any for whom he died should fall short of eternal life. And this must be the case, if any of these are supposed fully and finally to resist the grace of God. But,

3. We may consider God's chosen people, as committed to Christ, as his charge

ⁿ John xvii. 17, 24.

and trust, for which he is accountable to the Father ; and accordingly he speaks of that part of them who were as yet uncalled, as his other sheep, whom he must bring in, and who should hear his voice °. Other sheep I have, that is, I have their names in the book of life, their persons within the view of mine omniscience ; these I must bring in ; there is a necessity laid upon me ; not on their part, but as I would approve my self faithful to him, who appointed me. It would be greatly inglorious to the Mediator, should he, when giving up his accounts to the Father, say, here are some only of the children whom thou hast given me ; or, some of these, after all the pains I have been at, are yet unrenew'd, and so unfit for eternal life. Besides,

4. If the soul is passive in the implanting the principle of grace, as we have endeavour'd to prove, then there can be no resistance in regeneration, whatever opposition may be made by the soul to common convictions before regeneration : or what conflicts soever between flesh and spirit afterwards ; yet we may, with the apostle, be confident, that where the work is begun, it shall be carried on ; where the arm of the Lord is reveal'd, the success will be

answerable : so that we conclude that God, in the renewing of a sinner, works so as none can let ; otherwise he might be disappointed of his purpose, fail in his promise to his Son, or be overcome by the creature, in the exertion of the exceeding greatness of his power ; either of which are unworthy of him, who is a God of truth, and whose arm is almighty.

Having thus established the doctrine proposed, we shall now attend to some of the principal objections which are advanced against it ; such as,

1. It is said, by the opponents ^p of efficacious grace, that God hath given sufficient grace to all men, upon the due improvement of which they may be saved, if it is not their own fault ; and to assert the contrary, say they, is to wrong the fountain of goodness, and to represent him as a cruel, severe, and harsh being, and so to make him the object of our dread and hatred, rather than of our love and reverence : And if all men have sufficient grace, what necessity for this mighty power of God, in the conversion of a sinner ? And, to prove this, they quote these words : “ What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not

^p Dr. Whitby, Pag. 234.

done in it ; wherefore, when I look'd it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes ^a ?” To this we answer,

(1.) If it can be proved that God originally furnish'd man with sufficient knowledge of, and ability for the discharge of his duty, and that man, by his chosen rebellion, forfeited this, in common with all other mercies, and exposed himself to the deserved vengeance of God ; then there can be no more unrighteousness in God to deny the creature, thus fallen, what they call sufficient grace, than to reserve fallen angels in chains, under darkness, to the coming of the great day. There would be some appearance of reason in the objection, if man was now to be consider'd as innocent, and in the uprightness in which God originally made him ; but the scripture concludes him under guilt ; a very material circumstance, which the objection takes no manner of notice of.

(2.) If by sufficient grace is intended that which is absolutely so in it self, without the industry and care of the creature, or some superadded aids from heaven, we deny that there is such grace given to all men ; for if there was, the effect must be the same in all, and so none could miscarry. If it is said, the success depends on the

^a Jer. v. 4.

will of the creature, then this grace is so far insufficient in it self, and the phrase improper : If on a divine interposure, the objection comes to nothing ; since it is then agreed, with us, that let the supposed grace be never so sufficient, the event is determined by a divine agency. Besides, is it not evident, from the Spirit's striving with the ungodly world, in Noah's time, for a hundred years together, without success, and from the conduct of the Jews, who, for so many ages, enjoy'd the ministry of the prophets, and at length of the Son of God himself, that common convictions, attended with the best of external advantages, are insufficient to effect the great work of regeneration ? But,

(3.) As to the place quoted from the prophet Isaiah, in which God is represented, as asking what could he have done more that was not done ? We are not to suppose that he speaks as having exerted himself, *ad ultimum sui posse*, or as if he could not have given grace ; for, to be sure, he, who made the vine, could make it as fruitful as he pleased. The phrase is evidently more humano, in which the Almighty stoops to expostulate with the creature, for the abuse of his mercies, and upbraids him with his ingratitude ; but is far from giving the least countenance to his pride, in a false opinion of his own sufficiency.

We might add, as a farther proof, that what the objection calls sufficient grace, is not given to all; that the very means of grace are denied to many. The gospel revelation is entirely unknown to a great part of the world now, as it was to the greatest part of it, under the Jewish dispensation; and the declaration is express, that there is salvation in no other but our Lord Jesus Christ, nor any other name given, under heaven, whereby we can be saved: That faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God; so that we may ask, with the apostle, "How shall they believe on him, of whom they have not heard?" Such, undoubtedly, have not the sufficient grace which our opponents contend for; and I need only add, with respect to others, who are favour'd with the gospel, why do saints, after conversion, beg so earnestly of God, that he would enlighten, assist, support, and sanctify them, if the means which they enjoy'd were sufficient in themselves for this purpose, or might be render'd so, by their own care and industry? If we may judge of their sentiments by their petitions, they apprehended grace from God, as well as, and together with, the means, to be absolutely necessary to their spiritual improvement, and proficiency in holiness. But,

2. It is farther objected ^r, that if God has not given sufficient grace to all, why does he judge or condemn any for the want of it? To this we answer, with the apostle Paul, there will be two rules, by which the Judge will proceed in the great day; “As many as have sinned without the law, shall also perish without the law; and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law ^f.” I am far from believing that God will condemn the Heathen, who never heard of Christ, for not believing in him, but conclude that they will be judged by that law, which is writ upon their hearts, which either excuses, or accuses, according to the good or evil of their actions. And as for those who live under the sound of the gospel, and finally perish in unbelief, they will not, I humbly conceive, be condemned so much for their spiritual impotence, as for their hardening their hearts, and positively shutting their ears against Christ: And, if this is the case, is God unrighteous, who taketh vengeance? God forbid. But,

3. It is objected ^r, that God commands us to make our selves new hearts; that he says, “Turn ye, turn ye; why will ye die?” that we are exhorted to cleanse our

^r Dr. Whitby, Pag. 243.
Whitby, Pag. 237.

^f Rom. ii. 12.

^r Dr.

own hearts, and the like. Now, say they, if this is impracticable by the creature, how does this reflect upon the wisdom and goodness of the Law-giver? Upon his wisdom, in requiring that of us, which he knows is only in his own power to bestow; and upon his goodness, in deriding and mocking his creatures with their misery? What should we think of a prince, who should command his subjects, on pain of his displeasure, to measure out the ocean, or number the sands on the sea shore? Or should he require of them any thing else equally impossible, how unworthy would this be of him, and how injurious to them? And shall we impute this to him, who is infinite goodness, and immense wisdom? God forbid. To this we answer,

(1.) That if a command on God's part necessarily infers a full power on our part to comply with it, or fulfil it, then we must be supposed to have the same power to serve him, as the saints in glory have: And, in this respect, the difference between a state of imperfection and absolute perfection, would be lost; for God requires we should love him with all our hearts, and with all our souls; and the law admits of no abatement, but rigorously requires perfection, and threatens eternal death to him who continues not in all things

written therein to do them : So that if this were a fair way of reasoning, we must conclude, that because God commands we should be holy, as he is holy, walk as Christ walk'd, therefore we might, by our own power, cleanse our selves from every degree of filthiness, both of flesh and spirit, and perfect holiness in his fear. But,

(2.) The most that can be judged of commands and exhortations, in scripture, is this: They are representations of our duty, not of our strength; declarative of God's authority, and right of dominion, and not of our power or ability. A command respects us as creatures, whether upright or fallen; it is equally obligatory on us; God hath the same claim to worship from us, and the same dominion over us, since, as before the fall. To which we add,

(3.) The design of God, in these commands, is to acquaint us with the necessity and importance of those things which he requires; particularly in the instances refer'd to, "that without holiness we cannot see his face; that except a man have a new heart, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven:" And so they are intended, upon a conviction of our weakness and insufficiency, to lead us to him, who hath not only required them of us, but hath

promised to bestow them upon us ; so that the awaken'd sinner, comparing the command and the promise together, in the one, he is led to contemplate the majesty, authority, and holiness of God ; in the other, his grace and faithfulness ; the one is the rule of his duty ; the other, the ground of his faith. From the one, he learns what he ought to be, and do, whilst he is led on, and encouraged by the other, to pray for that grace which is sufficient for him.

The same may be said with respect to the exhortations which we meet with in scripture : They are designed to work upon the minds of those to whom they are address'd, and are made use of by the Spirit of God in convincing of sin ; and is there any impropriety in charging it upon a rebellious ungrateful generation, that whereas the ox knows his owner, and the ass his master's crib, they, by a neglect of duty to their daily Benefactor, discover more stupidity and dissimulation, than the very beasts, who perish ? May not the only wise God make use of the most moving and affecting language, in upbraiding his reasonable creatures with a contempt of his goodness, without supposing the sinner to be self-sufficient, and to stand in no need of his assistance ?

4. It is farther objected, that whereas we say the sinner is passive in regeneration, this is to destroy the freedom of the will, to subvert human liberty, and to reduce the reasonable creature to a mere machine, and so to take away the merit of virtue, by making it necessary, and not the result of choice. To this we answer; we are to distinguish between the nature of the will, and the qualities of it: The soul is the same, in all its faculties, after regeneration, as it was before, but the qualities of it are alter'd. The grace of God changes the corrupt, without invading the created nature of the will. Man's will, before the fall, was holy, as well as free, and so necessarily under a rational bias to every thing that was consonant to the divine mind, and which was made known to him as such: But the will of man, as fallen, is impair'd, not so much in its nature, or essence, as in its tendency; it is now most unhappily turn'd off from spiritual to carnal and sensual objects; the will is the same in it self, or in its nature, now, as it was then; but the bias is very different: So that if we would judge aright of the freedom of man's will, we must consider the objects about which it is supposed to be conversant. If the worship, service, or love of God, are taken into the question, we assert, these were originally the chosen

objects of the delight of the innocent creature, but are now the matters of his aversion, whilst he continues in a state of unregeneracy: And, when he is renew'd, and every high thought and imagination is reduced to a subjection to Christ, we never meet with a complaint from him of violence offer'd to his will, of being forced and compel'd to the choice of holiness. True, he is sensible of the hand of God upon his soul, he feels, acknowledges, and adores the arm of the Lord in his conversion; but he is so far from thinking it any hardship, that he rejoices abundantly in the mercy: And whereas, now his soul is thirsting after God, and his delight is in the law of the Lord, he is sensible this wonderful change, in his case, was effected by his power, who works in his people both to will and to do, of his own good pleasure; he is far from desiring such a liberty, as would leave him as liable to apostatize and miscarry, as to persevere and be saved: No, he rather longs to be in heaven, among the spirits of just men made perfect, under a glorious necessity (if that may be deem'd so, which is the matter of their constant choice and delight) of serving God, without weariness or interruption: If he might express the utmost of his ambition, it is to be with Jesus, in a world where to sin or offend is impossible.

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We may observe, that at the same time we assert that God works immediately in implanting the principle of grace, we allow, that the renew'd sinner is a proper subject of moral suasion; and that God deals with him, in promoting a work of grace in his heart, in an argumentative way, and enables him to compare and judge of things which are proposed to him, as proper to be pursued or avoided, and to choose, or refuse, as they appear desirable, or the contrary; though we conclude, in all this, the saint gladly esteems God's word as his only rule, and his Spirit as his only guide. As to what is said concerning virtue, and the rewards which are supposed to be due to it, I apprehend, man, in his best estate, is vanity; his obedience, in its utmost spirituality and perfection, is a debt which he owes to his great Creator; nor can he be profitable unto God, so as to enter a claim, or challenge a reward from the Almighty: So that as we utterly disclaim the doctrine of merit on the creatures part, we need not enquire how far the grace of God, in the renewing of a sinner, destroys this idol, which the pride of man is so willing to set up and worship.

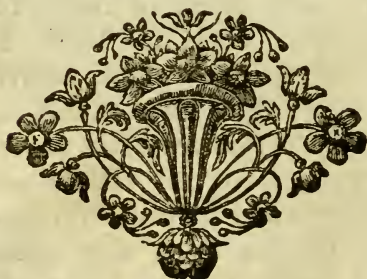
5. It is objected, if God works in us both to will and to do, and without his special grace we can do nothing, then we may e'en sit still, and do nothing, only wait
care-

carelessly till he shall excite us to, or assist us in our duty ; and so this doctrine, say they, destroys all diligence and industry, and renders the sinners endeavours, how sincere and serious soever, foolish and unnecessary. To this we answer, that the great God may certainly fix upon what order he pleases, in his conferring of favours, and bestowing undeserved blessings. Now the order he has settled is this ; that though he gives all freely, and not for our sakes, yet he will be sought to, and enquired of, by us, for those spiritual mercies, which we want at his hand : The direction is, ask, seek, and knock ; the encouragement lies in the promise, ye shall receive, ye shall find, and it shall be open'd unto you. They who seek me early, says God, shall find me ; and such as wait on him, shall renew their strength ; so that it is in a way of duty that we are to expect his presence. God is not, indeed, tied up to means, he may be found of them who seek him not ; but he has obliged us to a constant and diligent attendance upon them : And I would ask, Is not his promise of meeting and blessing us, of his being in the midst of us, to assist and comfort us, a more rational and powerful motive to a close adherence to our duty, than a false imagination of a power, which we are not really possessed of, and so must necessarily dis-

disappoint us in all our ungrounded expectations from it?

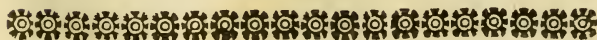
Thus we have gone through the principal objections advanced against the doctrine of efficacious grace, and conclude, upon the whole, that we have scripture and experience on our side, whilst we assert that regeneration is not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. What remains, but a serious enquiry, whether we have tasted that the Lord is gracious? how far we have been quicken'd by the mighty power of God, who were dead in trespasses and sins? Without the new birth there is no entering into heaven, our Lord has expressly assured us: What can we then say of God's gracious dealings with us? has he put his Spirit within us, writ his law in our hearts, taken the stone out of our hearts, and given us hearts of flesh? Have we been made to loath and abhor our selves; to prize, above every thing, the person, righteousness, and fullness of Christ? Have we fled for refuge to him, as ready to perish; and do we find a Spirit of grace and supplication pour'd out upon us? Do we thirst after communion with, and aim at a resemblance of Jesus? Is this, or such-like, the genuine experience of our souls? then let us call upon them, and all that is within us, to bless his name, whose workmanship we are: Let him

him have all the glory; and let it be our great concern, as well as prayer, to God continually, that we may, in all things, walk worthy of this holy vocation, adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour, till we get safe to that world, where Father, Son, and Spirit, will be all in all, as the everlasting source of pure and perfect happiness; and where, as the great Jehovah, one God over all, they will, to endless ages, inhabit the praises of those who shall stand before the throne, perfectly cleansed from all filthiness, both of flesh and spirit, and whose robes shall be wash'd and made white in the blood of the Lamb.



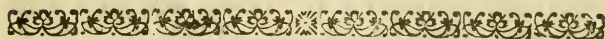


THE
DOCTRINE
OF
PERSEVERANCE in GRACE
STATED and DEFENDED:
IN TWO
SERMONS.
BY *THOMAS HALL*,
Minister of the Gospel.





S E R M O N I.



PHILIP. i. 6.

*Being confident of this very thing,
that he which hath begun a
good work in you, will per-
form it until the Day of Jesus
Christ.*



WHATEVER be the immu-
nities and privileges a people
at present enjoy, it is a vast
addition to have a good se-
curity for the lasting pos-
session of them. Glorious
things, indeed, are spoken of Zion, the
city of God: The inhabitants thereof are,
of all people upon earth, the most happy;
their peculiar privileges are all spiritual,
and, on that account, transcendently great
and

and excellent. As they are elected of God, they are the objects of his distinguishing and everlasting love; being redeemed and cloathed with the righteousness of Christ, they are bless'd with the forgiveness of their sins; being called effectually by the Spirit of God, they are made partakers of a divine nature, and deliver'd from the bond of iniquity; by being adopted and renewed, they become the children of God, are fitted for communion with their heavenly Father, admitted into his gracious presence, and actually constituted the heirs of glory. But that, which adds to all, is an assurance, that they who have once had an access into this grace, shall perpetually stand therein.

Without an assurance of this, the holy pleasure excited in the mind by the glorious truths of the gospel, insisted upon in the preceding sermons, would soon languish and die. It would certainly damp the joys of a believer, who knows the treachery of his own heart, and is convinced of the power and craft of his hellish foes, if, after all he hears of these invaluable grants, he must be told they may every one be revoked, and, through a possibility of falling from grace, the persons, who have been so highly favoured, may fall into disgrace, be abandon'd, and suffer'd to perish at last.

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That all fears of this kind may be prevented, he, who cannot lye, has declared, in his word, that “ the holy people, the redeemed of the Lord, who are fought out, shall be a city not forsaken ^a ;” that “ the place of their defence shall be the munition of rocks ; their bread shall be given them, and their waters shall be sure ^b :” That “ God will create upon every dwelling-place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies a cloud ; and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night ; for upon all the glory shall be a defence ^c .” From these, and many other declarations of heaven, the apostle might well be confident that he, who had begun a good work in the Philippians, would perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

The important article of the saints establishment and perseverance in grace, being allotted to my consideration in this Lecture, I have turn'd you to this verse ; because it will soon appear, from a just explication of the words, that this doctrine is really founded upon divine authority.

To guide us into the meaning of the text, and to direct us in its application, it will be proper to take notice of these four things.

^a Isai. lxii. 12.
iv. 5.

^b Chap. xxxiii. 16.

^c Chap.

1. The work it self, which is here spoken of.

2. The perfection that was to crown it.

3. The apostle's confidence with respect to that perfection.

4. The common concern and interest of the saints in the whole matter.

(1.) I shall consider the work it self, which was begun in the Philippians.

This is term'd a good work, by which we are to understand the work of grace, or the internal, supernatural, and effectual work of the Spirit of God upon their souls, whereby they were made partakers of his heavenly grace; in consequence whereof, they were renew'd, sanctified, or made holy, and thus became new creatures.

That this work was begun in them, may easily be collected from several passages in this epistle; particularly from the seventh verse of this chapter, where the apostle says, they "were partakers of his grace;" i. e. of the like grace with himself: And this is agreeable to his declaration in the twenty ninth verse, that unto them it was given, as well as to him, "both to believe on Christ, and to suffer for his sake." Farther, when he prays, in the ninth verse, that "their love might abound yet more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment," it is supposed that

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they

they were already favour'd with some knowledge and some judgment in spiritual things, and that their knowledge did not rest in mere speculation, but it warm'd the heart, and kindled an holy flame within; yea, that as their knowledge was not a dead notion, so neither was their love a blind affection; but its motions and actions were under the guidance of an enlighten'd mind; and, upon the whole of what the apostle had observed, while among them, and heard of them, when absent, he concluded that they were the seals of his apostleship and ministry, and, as such, he calls them "his joy and crown^d." Hence it appears that the good work of grace was begun in them.

And since no other work whatever, in which they were especially concern'd, either had, or was intended to have, the like abiding duration with the work of grace; and since nothing short of this could have given the like superlative occasion for that abundant thankfulness and joy, which, in the preceding verse, he declares he had, upon every remembrance of them, and their fellowship in the gospel, we must therefore conclude that the work of true grace, and not the preaching of the gospel; was that good work which the text refer'd

^d Chap. iv. 1.

to: And thus I shall constantly understand it. Let us next consider,

(2.) The perfection with which this work was to be crown'd.

This is express'd by its being perform'd until the day of Jesus Christ. By the day of Christ, is here meant the day of his second appearance, when he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. This interpretation agrees with the phrase used by the apostle, in his first epistle to the Thessalonians^e; where he prays, that "they might be preserv'd blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." The expression in the text running in such terms, it must imply a compleat protection thro' all the temptations and dangers, not of life only, but of death it self; and the saints may warrantably expect a final perseverance in grace, till they are brought safe to glory.

By the force of the word in the original, the perfection of the work is likewise signified. The Greek verb^f, which we render "perform," might well be translated "finish;" and when the last conflict with death is over, then shall the saints be immediately made perfect in holiness, and be preserv'd blameless till the day of Jesus Christ. Nor is it a determinate period, with an exclu-

‡ Chap. v. 23.

† ἐπιτελέσει.

sion of succeeding duration, that is here intended; but the meaning is, that the good work shall be finish'd, and, being finish'd, it shall remain for ever perfect; for, in the day of judgment, the saints shall be openly acknowledged, and pronounced blessed; yea, by some solemn action, they shall then be publicly confirm'd in a state of perfect purity and endless bliss. I shall therefore consider,

(3.) The apostle's confidence, with respect to this perfection.

In his expression, "Being confident of this very thing," we may take notice there are two pronouns^s; the emphasis whereof is well observed in our translation, the words being render'd, "this very thing." The phrase, as it stands here, points out three things.

[1.] The certainty of the saints final perseverance in grace. This privilege is here spoken of as a matter, the accomplishment whereof may be depended upon. The expression will not admit of the least doubt or suspicion; for it does not leave the case to rest upon a probability, though of the highest degree, but it carries it to the greatest certainty. It is as though he had said, if I can be confident of any thing, I can be confident of this, that where God

^s αὐτὸ τὸ αὐτό,

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has

has begun the good work, he will perform it until the day of Christ.

The grounds upon which his assurance was built, shall be consider'd hereafter ; I shall go on to observe that this phrase points out,

[2.] The importance of this privilege. The distinctness, earnestness, and fervor, with which the apostle mentions it, are plain indications that it is a matter of importance. Our attention would not have been quicken'd by this remarkable introduction, had not what follows carried in it an answerable weight and moment.

And there is good reason for the utmost stress to be laid upon the saints perseverance in grace ; for of all the privileges which belong to a believer's state, there is not a greater or one more valuable. It is so important and necessary, that without it all the blessings which could be included in the fellowship of the gospel, would quickly lose their glory ; yea, and become as things of naught, in regard of the comfort and compleat salvation of the soul. We may likewise take notice that the phrase points out,

[3.] The importance of the belief of this doctrine, as well as the moment of the doctrine it self. This we may infer, from its connection with the third and fourth verses, where we read of the apostle's
thank-

thankfulness to God upon every remembrance of the Philippians, and of his making request for them with joy. Now his confidence, that the good work would be perform'd to the day of Christ, stands as one reason, both of his thankfulness and of his joy.

Hence we may learn, that unless he had been confident of this very thing, he could not have presented his request and prayer for them with the joy that here he did; nor could there have been that life and chearfulness in his praise, that are here express'd: So that his confidence in this matter, or, in other terms, his firm belief of the doctrine of the saints final perseverance, had a special influence not only upon his comfort and joy, but likewise upon the praise and worship of God.

And the more direct, or the greater the influence which the belief of any doctrine has upon these things, the greater is the importance of such a belief, as must be allow'd by all, that have any due regard to either.

Having shewn the justness of these remarks, I shall proceed to the last thing proposed for the opening the words; and that is, to consider,

(4.) The common concern and interest of the saints in the whole affair; or their common part or lot in the state supposed,

and in the privilege asserted in the text. Under this head, we may observe two things.

[1.] That all the saints have the same good work begun in them, which was begun in the believers of the apostle's day. This will be evident, if we briefly take a comparative view of the spiritual and gracious attainments of those believers, with the near and just resemblance of the corresponding graces which are wrought in all the saints; e. g. Were the believers of old renew'd in the spirit of their mind, and bless'd with the knowledge of the Redeemer? so are all the saints. Were the principles of the doctrine of Christ in them the foundation of repentance from dead works, and faith towards God? so they are in all his people. Did the Lord open their hearts to believe unto righteousness? this is done for every child of God. Did their faith work by love? Did it purify the heart, raise their affections, and set them on things above? Did it give them victory over the world, and dispose them to follow Christ, at all hazards? The same effects do universally attend the faith of all that are truly sanctified. And we may warrantably declare, that the root of the matter is in all them with whom these fruits are found, that they have the faith, which is the fruit of the Spirit, the faith
which

which is of the operation of God. And, upon this foundation, we need not be afraid to assert, that they are partakers, with the Philippians, of the grace of God, as, upon the like foundation, the apostle acknowledges concerning them, that they were partakers of the same grace with him. Again, we may observe,

[2.] That the apostle had no special ground for his confidence in the case of the Philippians, beyond what he had with respect to all believers. If an attempt should be made to set aside this remark, one of these two things must be advanced, viz. either that the apostle's confidence was grounded on some particular revelation from God, promising the safety of the Philippians, in which other saints had no concern, like that which had a singular regard to the safety of Paul's mariners; or else it must be pretended, that his confidence arose from some testimony given of the truth of their graces, which testimony was peculiar to them, and not given of the graces of others. But neither of these suppositions will suit with the language, which immediately follows in the next verse; where the apostle says, "Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all." By this passage we are let into the apostle's method of reasoning in the case, and the force

force of his argument may be shewn after this manner.

He first lays it down as a scripture principle, or point of divine revelation, that where God has begun the good work, he will carry it on to the day of Christ. He then introduces his good opinion of the Philippians, with the grounds and reasons of it, declaring he accounted them partakers of the grace of God, and esteemed them to be persons in whom the good work was begun; and, from hence, the conclusion was easy and natural, that as God had begun the good work in them, he would surely perform it to the day of Christ; for it shall certainly be thus carried on in all upon whom it is once begun.

Beza observes, that the word, in the original, should here be taken to signify not his affection to them, but his judgment concerning them, and the state they were in^s. And, in our translation, it is thus render'd: Now, since the tree is known by its fruit, he could not but judge from the fruits they brought forth, some of which are here specified, that they really were what they professed to be:

^s Observandum est τὸ *περνεῖν* hoc in loco dici non de animi affectu sed de mentis judicio. Vide Bezam in loc.

And,

And, since he had no disorder, or irregularity, to charge upon any in that church, that was inconsistent with a state of grace, it was but proper and meet for him to think this, or to entertain this good opinion of them all, i. e. to esteem them all as gracious persons. And if, in truth, they were all partakers of the grace of God, he was then confident and sure they should all be preserved unto the coming of Christ ; for this shall undoubtedly be the privilege of all that are truly sanctified.

Thus we see that the apostle's confidence, express'd in the text, was not built on any special revelation, or peculiar testimony, in which none, besides the Philippians, had any concern ; but upon the new covenant, with its settlements and promises, as they are publish'd in the everlasting gospel, the benefits whereof are common to the saints in all ages ; and upon such evidences of the Philippians interest in that covenant, as will universally prove an interest therein, with respect to all in whom the like characteristics are found.

As the text, therefore, was suited to encourage the Philippians, in an holy, humble, and joyful expectation of their being preserv'd until the day of Christ ; so it is equally adapted to promote the like expectation and hope in all true believers, to the end of time.

To sum up the whole: Our asserting, from this passage, the doctrine of the saints perseverance in grace, is sufficiently justified, by a careful attention to the apostle's method of reasoning; for hereby it is manifest that this was not a privilege peculiar to the Philippians, or that there was nothing particular in their case to be the ground of his confidence concerning their safety. But his arguing upon this principle, in the manner we have shewn, proves that he took this to be the doctrine of the scriptures, applicable to the case of all, in whom the good work is begun: And, since he was under the immediate direction of the Spirit of God, in his reasoning, the use that is here made of this point, gives it a fresh confirmation; and the stress he lays upon it, ought to be esteemed as an infallible testimony, that this doctrine is of a divine original.

Thus I have given a large exposition of the text, to let you see that, in its most easy, natural, and necessary construction, it lies clear, as a sure foundation of the doctrinal observation, which I shall now raise from it, viz. that

Doct. The good work of grace shall be invincibly carried on to perfection in all the saints.

I am aware that my method in opening the words has taken up a pretty deal of your time, but some of it may now be redeemed; for I need not give any farther description of the work of grace, nor add any thing more to shew that this work is truly begun in all the saints, or that there is the same reason for us to conclude that the good work shall be carried on in all believers, as there was for the apostle's expectation, that it should be perform'd in the Philippians. What I have hinted already, in the explication of the text, is, I think, as much as my present business requires me to say upon these heads. And thus my work is contracted, and will lie chiefly in these three things.

I. I shall endeavour to state the point.

II. I shall produce some arguments for the proof of this doctrine.

III. I shall make some reply to the principal objections that are urged against it; and conclude with some directions and practical improvement.

I. I shall endeavour to state the point distinctly and fully.

This is necessary, for the better clearing of this doctrine. What I design here, shall be reduced to three general remarks: I shall not confine my self to a bare naming

ming the heads, but enlarge upon each of them ; and hereby I would hope things may be so distinguished and settled, as sufficiently to guard against several of the objections brought by those who oppose this doctrine. And if I should be enabled to do this with some degree of exactness and care, I apprehend, it would very much facilitate my work in the remaining part of the design. For the clearer the distinction shall be made to appear, and the stronger the proof shall be of what is now to be laid down, with the more justice and freedom, I may venture to recur to these remarks, as occasion shall hereafter require ; especially when I come to discharge this doctrine of the seeming difficulties with which some would endeavour unjustly to load it. I shall therefore observe,

1. That the establishment or perseverance which the scriptures assert, respects the work of true grace, and that only.

2. It respects the state of believers, but not their frames ; or it respects the principle of grace, but not its present exercise.

3. That all means necessary for the establishment of this good work, are under the direction of God ; and all obstacles which would threaten a disappointment, are subject to his controul.

1. The

1. The establishment and perfection which is here asserted, respects the work of true grace, and that only.

There are works of another kind, and of a different nature, which may decay and come to nothing; but the failure of these can never affect the truth of our doctrine: And the reason is plain, because, though these do generally, more or less, attend the work of grace, yet true grace does not always accompany them. I shall instance particularly in two things.

(1.) In the gifts of the Spirit. By the gifts of the Spirit, I here mean his common operations upon the minds and affections of persons who hear the gospel; which operations, how strong or powerful soever they be, do yet never bring the recipient, or subject thereof, into a truly gracious or holy state. That there is really a distinction to be made between the common gifts and saving graces of the Spirit; or that many of the gifts of the Spirit may be confer'd separately from his graces, may be easily shewn, from several places of scripture; particularly from thatⁱ where our Lord speaks of some who were endued with the gift of prophecy, with the faith of miracles, and the power of casting out devils, but were never bless'd with that

ⁱ Matt. vii. 21.

grace, which is the fruit of special love; which effectually turns the heart from iniquity, and whose exercise ever meets with our Saviour's approbation: They had gifts sufficient for the healing the bodily diseases of others, but wanted the grace that was necessary for the curing the spiritual maladies of their own souls.

This distinction may be farther supported, from the apostle's argument ^k; where he supposes that men might have the highest measures of the gifts of the Spirit, and yet be nothing in point of true grace: They might have such gifts, as to be capable of understanding all mysteries, and all knowledge: They might have such faith, as to be able to remove mountains, and a zeal that would incline them to make the most liberal distributions among the poor, and to die, at last, as martyrs in the cause of religion, and yet be destitute of that charity and love to Christ, and his people, which is one of the essential properties of true grace.

And as this distinction is supposed, in this argument, so it is confirm'd by another passage ^l; where the apostle plainly shews, that there was, in fact, a distribution of gifts, wholly separate from a work of grace upon the hearts of those that re-

^k 1 Cor. xiii. 1—4.

^l 2 Cor. xi. 13.

ceived them: And this to such a degree, that men who were inwardly full of all wickedness, were yet in a capacity of imposing upon churches, upon the saints and people of God themselves; yea, by reason of the abundant furniture they had, as to the gifts of the Spirit, they could pass for the apostles of Christ.

And if such an horrid deceit could be practised, in that pure and enlighten'd age, no marvel that, in these times of degeneracy and darkness, many can transform themselves so far, as to have a name to live, though they are dead. But the apostle tells us ^m, that their end shall be according to their works. As their works are hypocritical and deceitful, so their end shall be destruction.

Whatever gifts are receiv'd without grace, they will fail. Their nature is not abiding; neither has God engaged for their continuance: And as these gifts will fail, so the works, which were wrought in the exercise thereof, will fail likewise. And, generally speaking, by one trying dispensation or another, the Lord turns such professors as these upside down; and shews, that while they said they were Jews, call'd themselves his people, and were accounted so by others, still all their profession was a

^m 2 Cor. xi. 15.

lye, during its whole space, they held the truth in unrighteousness. They were always hypocrites, and no wonder that at last they proved apostates.

Such professors as these our times have brought forth in great abundance. Many, too many, have there been, who, through the brightness of their gifts, and the splendor of their conversation, have appear'd as stars of the first magnitude; but a little time has discover'd them to be no more than falling meteors. However, such dreadful instances as these, frequently as they happen, should never be objected against the truth of our doctrine, which never engages for the continuance of the gifts, or of the common operations of the Spirit, but only maintains the final establishment of true grace. As another work that may fail, I shall instance,

(2.) In the outward and visible state of particular churches. By this, I mean that outward fellowship which professors have one with another, in all the ordinances of the gospel, with the external privileges and advantages belonging thereunto, appointed and ordain'd of God, for the mutual edification of his people. This may properly be term'd a work of God, not only as it is stamp'd with his authority, but as every thing which relates to the state it self, together with its happy and flourishing condition,

dition, depends upon his providence and care. And this is a good work, ever erected with a gracious design.

But here observe, that when the great end for which a church state was founded, in any particular place, is answer'd in the conversion and salvation of those whose spiritual and eternal advantage was to be promoted thereby, it may then be suffer'd to fall into decay; yea, by degrees, as the number of the godly decreases, and in proportion as they who, through grace, were enabled to be faithful, are taken away, others, of the like gracious spirit and temper, not rising up in their room, the glory of that state will certainly decline; and many, who were never effectually called, creeping in unawares, the church, at length, having lost its upright members, becomes destitute of its first love, and leaves its first works. Thus, instead of truth, springs up error in doctrine; and, in this sense, there will be a notorious falling from grace, that is, from the doctrines of grace; and, in consequence of this, all purity in worship is gradually destroy'd, by increasing corruption, till, at length, loose and licentious practices wholly exterminate that holiness and strictness in conversation, which formerly prevail'd.

Hereby God is provoked; and, when his testimonies, admonitions, and warnings,

have been neglected, slighted, and despised, he comes and removes their candlestick out of his place. Thus a work that was begun in mercy, to some, is finally ruin'd in judgment to others.

But yet, if the case be rightly consider'd, no argument can justly be taken from hence, with which to oppose the doctrine of the saints perseverance; for he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, will never suffer the shadow of death to stretch it self over the regions, where his people dwell, till provision is made for their safety. The righteous therefore shall either be taken away from the evil to come, and be lodg'd in the silent grave; or, by some unexpected turn in providence, they shall be brought nearer the line, where the gospel shines with greater strength and beauty; or if, after all, any true believer be still left behind, he shall be preserv'd by the special care of heaven, though he should be as a mourning dove, hid in the "clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs:" So that however the gifts of the Spirit, or the visible state of particular churches may cease, yet the work of true grace, with which alone our doctrine is concerned, that shall never fail. The next remark is,

2. That the continuance, or establishment in grace, which the scriptures assert, respects

respects the state of believers, but not their frames; or it respects the principle of grace, but not its present exercise.

It is true, a perfection in grace is design'd hereafter: The saints shall then be as the wings of a dove, cover'd with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold: Their actings shall then be constantly pure and holy, free from all sinful mixture and alloy; no blemish shall spoil the glory, no defect shall mar the beauty of their heavenly worship. But, while they are in this world, they lie among the pots; and, as the word of God does not promise, so neither does it so much as allow the expectation of a total escape from all defilements here. Nay, their own hearts are a constant seat of war, for they have two contending powers within: They have a law in their members, warring against the law of their minds, and they are sometimes brought into captivity to the law of sin, which is in their members. They are too often foil'd in particular conflicts, and sin too frequently gains a temporary ascendant over grace. Hence arise the daily miscarriages which stain the character of the brightest saints. Hence spring the more gross enormities and open transgressions of some believers, by reason whereof their profession is slur'd, their peace broken, their conscience wounded, the paths of

religion are reproach'd, and a stumbling-block thrown in the way of others. Under the remembrance and sense of these things, some go mourning all their days.

Thus Christ, the Leader of his people, and the Captain of their salvation, does sometimes suffer the enemy to take an advantage, that he may have the opportunity of displaying his glory, in recovering it again at his own pleasure, to the greater confusion and overthrow of his and his peoples adversaries. But still, in the midst of all the changes, to which the present condition of the saints is liable, there are two things belonging to their state, which shall never fail.

(1.) The saints relation to God, that shall never cease.

The peculiar relation they stand in to God, is that of children to a Father; and such are the glories of this relation, that it is founded upon the new covenant, and the Mediator's perfect atonement. From thence results the security of their standing in this grace, as well as their first access into it; for though their iniquities, which are daily repeated, highly deserve that this relation should be dissolved, yet this judgment shall be continually prevented, through the atoning virtue of the Redeemer's blood. Thus much is intimated, when the apostle shews, that God's resolution to take his people in-

to a new and peculiar relation to himself, is executed through the exercise of his pardoning mercy ⁿ; for this being settled as the constant method of his dispensing the grace of adoption, it teaches us that justification and adoption are both founded in the blood of Christ, and inseparably connected one with the other. And, since these blessings are inseparable, it follows, that the same promises which assure us that the justification of the saints shall be compleat and perpetual, do likewise assure us, that their adoption shall be uninterrupted and eternal. And when God says, “ I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more ^o;” it is constructively the same as if he had said, I will always be their God, and they shall always be my people; i. e. the relation shall continue, they shall be my sons and my daughters, and that for ever.

It must be allow'd, indeed, that the children of God, by their frowardness and remissness in their walk, may provoke him to deny them the light of his countenance, he may hide his face for a time. Or he may frown and make them sensible of his fatherly displeasure, yet the relation shall never be extinct. God may chastize

ⁿ Heb. viii. 10, 12.

^o Ver. 12.

and correct his children ; his compassion and love will engage him to do so, but he will never discard, or cast them out of his family. The passage we meet with in our Saviour's conference with the Jews, if taken as a standing maxim, is a sufficient proof of this. "The Son abideth ever." The antithesis in the verse directs us in the explication, and shews that the words are applicable to the case before us, as well as to the purpose for which our Lord produced them^p. The servant abideth not in the house for ever ; no, upon any great offence, or for repeated misdemeanors, he is dismiss'd, turn'd out of doors, and the relation dissolv'd ; but there is one sort of treatment for servants, and another for children. Wise and tender parents will wait long, and try all methods, to gain upon their children, and win them over unto that subjection and obedience, which is their duty : And will not the Lord, who is infinite in his grace and love, exercise the greatest forbearance with his children ? Since it is in his power, may it not be expected that he will melt them down, turn them from their evil ways, and effectually draw them with his love ? Does not his promise to heal their back-slidings suppose that he will take away their iniquity,

^p John viii, 35.

through the blood of the covenant, and receive them graciously ^a? Does not his promise of putting his laws into their mind, and of writing them in their hearts ^r, engage that he will make them to know wisdom in the hidden part, and teach them to walk humbly with their God? And is not their adoption constantly accompanied with regeneration, that, by virtue of their new nature, they may be fitted for holy walking? Besides, the design of their adoption is, that it should be to the praise of the glory of his grace ^t; which it cannot be, unless it be perpetual. It can never be pretended therefore, without a flat contradiction to scripture, that any who have been once adopted into the number of the children of God, may afterward fall, so as to become the children of the devil.

(2.) The vital principle of grace in the saints shall never fail.

This principle, which is infused at the instant of their regeneration, shall continue and abide in them for ever. The spiritual life is, in some respects, like the natural, both are liable to many indispositions, sicknesses, and faintings: And as in a swooning fit, for a time, all natural sense and motion may be gone, and yet the life remain, so the

^a Hof. xiv. 2, 4.
i. 5, 6.

^r Heb. viii. 10.

^t Eph.

operations of grace may be interrupted, and, through the violence of temptation, the strength of corruption, or some spiritual decay, the actings of grace may be suspended, yet the principle of spiritual life does still continue. Under all the witherings of true believers, the seed of God remains in them, and his anointing does still abide, otherwise the promise would fail ^t; in which it is engaged that the root of the righteous shall not be moved. Their bloom may be sometimes blighted, or their fruit blown off, and their branches may be toss'd with tempests; but their root shall not be mov'd; no, not through any means, not upon any occasion, nor by any adversary whatever; and this because it is the Lord, who says, "I will keep it; I will water it every moment ^u." And, from the authority of such declarations of the word, we may venture positively to assert, that none who have had the principle of grace did ever lose it. Peter's faith, though it fail'd as to its exercise, did yet continue as to its principle, which immediately revived, through the assistance that came with his Saviour's look. It would be wholly inconsistent with the success and prevalency of the Redeemer's intercession, to imagine that the apostle's grace was to-

^t Prov. xii. 3.

^u Isai. xxvii. 3.

tally lost, after his Lord had pray'd that his faith should not fail; and Christ's intercession, which is still carried on in heaven, is a firm security for the preservation of the spiritual life of all believers. For wise and holy ends, indeed, he may suffer them to fall, to the breaking of their bones, that they may learn to be humble and watchful; but the vital principle of grace shall never be extinguished; for their life, in the fountain and original of it, is hid with Christ in God ^w, where it is kept safe, out of the reach of the venomous darts of all its deadly enemies. This leads us to the last remark, which is,

3. That all means necessary for the accomplishing this good work, are under the direction of God, and all possible intervening events, which would threaten a disappointment, are subject to his controul. The means necessary for the perfecting this work, are either external or internal.

(1.) External. Among these are included the ordinances of the gospel; such as the word sacraments and prayer, which, with all the circumstances that relate both to their administration, and the saints attendance upon them, are under the divine direction. And as the Shepherd of Israel knows where he feedeth, where he maketh

^w Col. iii. 3.

his flock to rest at noon, so he will take care that none of his shall turn aside, by the flocks of his companions. Again, he knows what stated and frequent attendances on the means of grace are necessary for his peoples growth ; and he can save them from all confinement, that would bar their approach to his sanctuary, and deliver them from those allurements and snares that would detain them from duty, or divert them from the paths of holiness : And he will watch that nothing of this kind shall prejudice their establishment, or hinder their final perseverance in grace. Farther, he knows how long a standing in the school of Christ on earth, is necessary to fit and prepare for his immediate and glorious presence in heaven ; and he will give his children a due time, that they may have a proportional space to go through that course of instruction and new obedience, that variety of temptation and experience, which is proper for their greater proficiency and edification now, and their compleat perfection in knowledge and grace at last.

But, besides these, there are means of another nature, absolutely necessary for the carrying on the work ; and these are,

(2.) Internal and spiritual ; such as the repeated actings of faith and repentance, of hope and love, fresh hungering and thirst-

thirsting after righteousness, a renew'd delighting in God, with a resolv'd adherence to him, and a fix'd dependance upon him. These likewise, with the various inducements, incitements, and helps needful thereunto, are all under the care of him, who has begun the good work, and is determined to bring it to perfection. Accordingly he blesses his people with farther anointings of the Holy One ; “ He giveth power to the faint ; and to them that have no might, he increaseth strength ^x.” A bountiful God will supply all their need ^y, and give them all things pertaining to a life of godliness, and withhold no good thing, whether it be food, correction, or healing, from those, who, being once brought into a state of grace, are thus enabled to walk uprightly ^z. When their souls cleave to the dust, he will quicken them, and, after all their languishing in grace, he will “ make them revive as the corn, and grow as the vine, till their scent shall be as the wine of Lebanon ^a.”

And as all means are under his direction, so all obstacles are subject to his controul.

Nothing of this kind can possibly occur, but it must arise either from the devil, world, or flesh. These are, indeed, potent and

^x Isai. xl. 29.

^y Philip. iv. 19.

^z Psal. lxxxiv. 11.

^a Hos. xiv. 7.

subtil enemies; yet, however they may combine and unite their force, they shall never be able to compass the ruin of the saints, or hinder their complete salvation. As to the devil, he is an enemy in chains^b; his power is limited, and the God of peace shall bruise him under their feet^c. As to the world, when Christ gave himself for the sins of his people, it was with a design that they might be deliver'd from this present evil world^d; and, though they are not taken out of the world immediately after their conversion, yet our Lord has pray'd, that they may be kept from the evil^e. As to their corruptions, the most dangerous of all their enemies, these shall be subdued, and no sin suffer'd to have the dominion over them^f: But they shall, at last, be called, "the holy people, the redeemed of the Lord, fought out, a city not forsaken^g." He that is their sun to direct, will be their shield to defend them^h. He will keep them night and day, lest any hurt themⁱ. No weapon form'd against them shall ever prosper^k; for God will fulfil in them all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power, that the name of the Lord Jesus

^b Jude, ver. 6.^c John xvii. 15.^d Psal. lxxxiv. 11.

liv. 17.

^e Rom. xvi. 20.^f Rom. vi. 14.^g Isai. xxvii. 3.^d Gal. i. 4.^g Isai. lxii. 12.^k Chap.

Christ may be glorified in them, and they in him¹; and this notwithstanding their unworthiness, and hell-deservings, according to the grace of our God, and the Lord Jesus Christ; for tho' he may take vengeance of their inventions, yet a covenant-God will forgive their sins^m.

Now, from this state of the case, we may learn what is contained in this doctrine, and what is not. Let us take a summary view of the foregoing remarks, and we may see that

This doctrine does not assert that men, who were never truly sanctified, may not lose the gifts, the convictions and illuminations wrought in them by the common operations of the Spirit of God. It never asserts, that the seeming goodness of men, void of grace, may not be like the morning cloud, or the early dew, which soon passeth away; or that the shews of religion, by which the splendid profession of hypocrites is supported for a time, may not fail, after all, and come to nothing: Nor does it assert, that persons, who have only a speculative and notional knowledge of the truths of the gospel, may not change their opinion, and fall from the doctrines of grace; nor that visible churches, as such consider'd, may not lose their first love,

¹ 2 Thess. i. 11, 12.

^m Psal. xcix. 8.

and depart from their first works ; nor that the children of God themselves may not possibly fall into some open acts of sin, and be guilty of such partial back-sliding, as call for the deepest humiliation, and the most bitter lamentation.

But then this doctrine does maintain, that such as really have a good work begun in them, shall never fall from their spiritual and peculiar relation to God ; they shall never lose the vital principle of grace, nor sink again into a state of corruption and condemnation : But these shall be carried on in the paths of holiness ; they shall either be wholly preserved from remarkable and scandalous falls, or be recover'd, and set upon their feet again. They shall be restored, healed, revived, and finally kept, through faith, unto salvation ; and this shall be accomplish'd by the mighty power of that God, who has all succour, relief, and assistance, at his command, and all possible interveniencies under his controul.

This is the light, in which, I apprehend, this doctrine is set in the word of God, wherein it is fully reveal'd and confirm'd, by passages almost innumerable. I shall now proceed to the next general head of discourse ; under which,

II. I shall produce some arguments for the proof of this doctrine.

I have hinted already that the apostle's method of reasoning shews this to be the doctrine of the scriptures: I shall here add, as a GENERAL PROOF, that in them it is taught with such clearness and plainness, that he may run that reads. And it is worth our observing how much the scriptures abound with it, how frequently it is introduced, upon how many, and what different occasions it is used, and with what a variety of expression it is there set forth. Sometimes it is asserted in a way of positive affirmation, and in a style divested of all metaphor; as where Christ says, "He that believeth shall be savedⁿ;" and "whosoever believeth in me, shall never die^o." Sometimes it is express'd in a figurative and symbolical manner: Thus "the path of the just shall be as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day^p:" "The righteous shall hold on his way; and he that hath clean hands shall wax stronger and stronger^q." Sometimes it is signified by the guard that

ⁿ Mark xvi. 16.

^o John xi. 26.

^p Prov. iv. 18.

^q Job xvii. 9.

is set over the righteous: Thus we read, that "upon all the glory shall be a defence^r;" and "there shall no evil happen to the just^t." Surely then they shall not be left to a final apostacy, the worst and forest evil that could befall them. At other times, this doctrine is refer'd to, as the ground of the holy and humble confidence of the saints, and plainly supposed as the foundation of their comfortable hope, their raised expectation, and earnest prayers. Hence arose such conclusions and consequent petitions as these: "The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me: thy mercy, O Lord, endureth for ever; forsake not the works of thine own hand^u:" Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory^u."

Here I might quote many passages out of the New Testament, in which prayers are offer'd up for the establishment of the saints; and these prayers of the inspired writers, which are recorded and deliver'd down as matter of instruction to others, were indited and directed by that infinitely blessed and glorious Spirit, who searcheth all things, even the deep things of God: They must certainly therefore be framed

^r Isai. iv. 5.
^u Psal. lxxiii. 24.

^t Prov. xii. 21.

^u Psal. cxxxviii. 8.

and formed in an entire correspondence to the purpose and decrees of God, and in an exact consonancy with what he has promised in the covenant of grace.

These petitions then are so far from being an objection against this doctrine, as some would imagine, that they are really a strong argument for it; for since the apostles, while under the immediate guidance of the Spirit, could pray for nothing but what was agreeable to the purpose of God; and yet they did, even at that time, as appears from their epistles, pray for the establishment of the saints; it follows, that their establishment is a thing agreeable to the divine counsel. And since these petitions stand clear of those expressions of submission, which attended their prayers, when events were to them uncertain, the holy fervour and confidence, with which they are presented, afford a good proof that the apostles knew what they pray'd for herein to be really agreeable to the purpose of God, and consequently that God had declared and promised this blessing in the covenant of grace.

As to the pretence, that such an assurance of the saints establishment would have render'd their prayers needless, or that it would have been impertinent in

them to have pray'd for that which Gdo had promised and assured them he would give ; this can no more affect the prayers of the apostles, than it would affect the prayer of David, who was a more proper judge of the fitness of a request to be offer'd to God, than any among us can pretend to be ; and yet we find he pleaded for the very thing which God had assured him should come to pass : " Now, O Lord God, the word which thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, establish it for ever, and do as thou hast said v."

In his example then we have an instance to prove that the saints assurance of God's intention to confer a blessing upon them, did not make them think their prayers were needless, and would be impertinent ; and that this assurance, instead of making them remiss and negligent in their duty, as some have suggested, will be one of the most powerful means of giving vigour and life to their supplications. This is also evident from that expression of David, where he says ; " For thou, O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house, therefore hath thy servant found in his

heart to pray this prayer unto thee^w;" and so he goes on in the following verses, still pointing to the promise upon which his hope was raised, as the special reason and motive, by which his importunity in prayer was quicken'd.

And since the way of the Lord with his servants is one, in teaching them to regulate their prayers by his declarations of mercy, why may we not conclude, that the inspired prayers of the apostles were founded on a divine revelation and promise, as well as these prayers of David, we may be sure at least that no impropriety in presenting requests upon such a foundation, can ever be any just objection against it.

And should this be admitted, yet it will not follow, as some would suggest, that then, from the saints prayers for daily protection and preservation from sin, it might be infer'd that God had promised them an absolute security from all transgression.

This is not a parallel case; for there is a vast difference between the inspired prayers of the apostles, and the weak supplications of those who have received the gifts and graces of the Spirit, in a much

^w 2 Sam. vii. 27.

lower degree, and who, at best, share in his assistance, in a very imperfect measure, even such as leaves them subject to many failures in their prayers, as well as in any other part of their conduct.

We may also observe, that the daily petitions of the saints for protection from sin, are grounded upon general promises and declarations in the word, that “sin shall not have dominion over them^x ;” that “the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation^y ;” and that “God, who is faithful, will not suffer them to be tempted above that they are able, but will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape, that they may be able to bear it^z.” And all these prayers of the saints, put up in faith and hope, shall be answer’d, either in kind, or in value; either they shall have, in particular instances, the protection they ask, and be preserved from committing the transgression, against which they pray, or the sin shall be pardon’d through the Redeemer’s blood, and they recover’d from it with greater advantage, their strength being renewed, and their experience of his grace enlarged.

^x Rom. vi. 14.

^y 2 Pet. ii. 9.

^z 1 Cor.

13.

But if a final perseverance should not be granted, then all their prayers would be lost; and not theirs only, but the prayers of the inspired writers on their behalf; for, should they miss of this favour, no after-blessing could be found to countervail the loss, which, by a final apostacy, they must sustain. But this shall never be the case of any of the saints, for the way of the Lord, which has been kindness and mercy in promising salvation, shall likewise be faithfulness and truth ^a in the performance of it.

^a Psal. xxv. 10.





S E R M O N II.

PHILIP. i. 6.

*Being confident of this very thing,
that he which hath begun a
good work in you, will per-
form it until the Day of Jesus
Christ.*



AFTER I had explain'd the words of the text, in the former discourse, I rais'd this doctrinal observation, viz. that,

Doct. The good work of grace shall be invincibly carried on to perfection in all the saints.

I then stated the point, and gave a general proof of it, by observing how frequently this doctrine is mentioned in scripture, I shall proceed now to consider some particular arguments to support it. The chief I shall insist upon shall be drawn from the following heads.

1. The immutability of the purpose and promise of God.

2. The Redeemer's care over his people, with his peculiar relation unto, and union with them.

3. The constant abode and inhabitation of the Holy Ghost in the souls of believers.

1. I shall consider the immutability of the purpose and promise of God, as one argument for the proof of this doctrine.

The harmonious agreement which there is between these two, makes it needless here to speak to them apart; for as the promise is a declaration of the counsel of God, so a declaration of his counsel in this matter is equivalent to a promise. And if, for brevity sake, I should, under this head, wave the distinction, and consider them together; or if I should promiscuously call one by the name of the other, it will not, I think, in the least affect the argument.

That I may still contract the more, I shall presume upon some things which lie as the foundation of our reasoning;
but

but shall be careful herein not to exceed what, I apprehend, would be allowed by those of the contrary scheme. The things then which I take for granted are these; namely, that the declarations of grace, made in the word of God, are to be the only rule of our faith, and the just and adæquate foundation of our hope, in all matters that respect the welfare of the saints in time, and to eternity. Further,

I presume, it will be allowed that there are many promises in the word of God which relate to the saints perseverance in grace, and that these promises shall be made good, according to the meaning and design of him that gave them. As to the present argument therefore, the proof of our doctrine depends upon a right interpretation, and due application of the promises; and this shews it to be my proper business, under this head, to make out these two propositions.

(1.) That final perseverance is promised in the word of God.

(2.) That the promises wherein this is contain'd, are applicable to all believers.

(1.) Final perseverance is promised in the word of God.

If we look into the promises, we shall quickly find, that, among other articles of spiritual blessings, this privilege of the saints perseverance is one, really comprehended

hended and ascertained. For an instance hereof I shall name that text where the apostle declares, that “the Lord hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee ^a.” That we may interpret these words in a consistence with their context, and with other parts of divine revelation, as well as with the special design for which they are quoted and used by the apostle, it will be proper to observe, in some instances, what is not included in them, and then declare more directly what their meaning must be.

We may be confident, these words could never mean, that, through the presence of God with his people, they should have an exemption from all straits and difficulties in the world, or from inward temptations, any more than outward; nor that they should be absolutely preserved from sinning, any more than from being tempted to sin. Such a construction is peremptorily forbidden, by several expressions in the context, which shews, that, among those who had an interest in the promise, some “were in bonds, and did suffer adversity,” while others, who enjoy’d an outward prosperity, were tempted to “covetousness in their conversation;” and it would be a weakness to imagine,

^a Heb. xiii. 5.

that, in the midst of these many temptations, they did wholly escape all inward defilement. The words therefore could never be intended to engage for a present exemption from such evils as these.

Their meaning then must be, that the saints should never be wholly deserted, nor utterly abandoned by the Lord. His promise “never to forsake them,” must be supposed to signify, that he would be ever with them as their covenant-God and Father, through his Son; that he would ever appear, in his own way, on their behalf, and exert himself in his all-sufficiency, according to his infinite wisdom, power, and love, to support and comfort them in their afflictions, to relieve them under their temptations, or to revive and restore them after they had fallen. It means, that tho’ they might not always have him in their sight, yet he would be ever with them, by his gracious and his holy presence, to prevent their total apostacy, and to secure their final perseverance in grace, till they are brought safe to glory.

And this explication is entirely agreeable to many other passages in scripture; particularly to those words of the apostle, where he expressly asserts, “That the Lord shall stablish his people, and keep them from evil^b.” And again, to what

^b 2 Theff. iii. 3.

he says in another place, where, after he prays for the Thessalonians, that “ their whole spirit, soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of Christ,” he presently adds, “ Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.” And this infallible declaration being immediately subjoin’d, the apostle’s petition is thereby advanced, beyond all contradiction, into the full significancy of an heavenly promise.

Thus you see a final perseverance in grace is fully comprehended and ascertained in the promise and purpose of God; and it is needless here to produce any farther proof of this kind; only, before I quit this head, I am obliged to observe, as to the passages last quoted from the epistles to the Thessalonians, that though they come up fully to our present purpose, yet they will not bear such a construction as would make them prove too much. This, indeed, has been the pretence of some, who tell us, that either they must promise an absolute freedom from all evil in this present state, or they cannot be taken absolutely to promise an escape from any evil at all. Thus some, by stretching the meaning of these texts too far, have attempted to weaken their force, that they might not stand in such a fit condition for

^c 1 Theff. v. 23, 24.

the defence of our doctrine, as their just explication would fairly leave them. But the guard with which the words are surrounded in their respective contexts, is abundantly sufficient to over-rule the extravagance of such a wild construction; and our argument remains, after all, in its full strength, to answer the purpose for which it is produced: For, in one of the places, the apostle desires the prayers of the Thessalonians for his own deliverance from outward troubles; and, in the other he presents his prayers for them, that they may be wholly sanctified. These passages are a good clew to lead us into the true meaning of these promises, and do unanswerably determine their sense to be this, viz. That though the Lord may suffer his children to be in trouble, as the apostle himself then was; or though he may leave them to fall into sin, as will be frequently the case, while they are sanctified but in part, yet he will infallibly keep them safe from all such evils, as would prevent their progress to a final perfection in holiness, or bar their appearing at last without blame before him in love. I come now to the second proposition advanced, which is that,

(2.) These promises are applicable to all believers.

This

This will be evident, if we consider that every true believer answers the characters by which the word describes the persons to whom these promises do belong, and for whose salvation the promises do engage. For instance: Are they described by their trusting in God, as where the Psalmist says, “They that trust in the Lord shall be as mount Sion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever^d?” This part of the character is ever found with true believers: It is an essential property of faith to be trusting in the Lord. Faith teaches, directs, and, so far as it prevails, it enables the soul of a believer to trust God in the way of his covenant. He trusts God with all his concerns, whether relating to soul or body: He trusts in him for all the blessings and benefits which he has promised to give, through his Son, that his people may be safe, easy, and comfortable here, as well as happy, blessed, and glorious hereafter: And where there is no trusting in God, there is no faith.

Again, are the heirs of the promise described by their humility, as where it is said, the Lord “giveth grace unto the humble^e?” As to this, there can be no more certain evidence of true humility, than a man’s quitting his own righteous-

^d Psal. cxxv. 1.

^e James iv. 6.

ness, his renouncing all confidence in the flesh, and truly submitting himself to be saved entirely and only by the righteousness of Christ, and the strength of his Redeemer. Nor can there be a more manifest proof of true humility, than a believer's deliberate, resolved, and chearful resignation of himself to the command, conduct, and disposal of his heavenly Lord and Master.

Once more are the heirs of the promise described by their affection and love to Christ; as where the apostle says, "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity^f." What clearer proof can there be of an hearty affection to the dear Redeemer, than a person's sacrificing his most beloved lust and corruption; and his suffering the loss of those things, which are dearest to the flesh, that he may win Christ, and be found faithful in his adherence to him?

And are not all these things wrought by the Spirit in the heart of every believer? Do they not, in fact, enter the character of all the saints? We may therefore justly infer, that the saints are all interested in the promises which engage for a final perseverance, and consequently they shall be as mount Sion, which cannot be removed.

^f Eph. vi. 24.

And, since this must be understood of a continuance in a state of grace, we may learn, from hence, that all the cautions and threatnings, all the commands and exhortations in scripture, which have any reference to persons continuing in the faith, or their holding the beginning of their confidence stedfast to the end, should never be so interpreted, as to clash with these, and the like clear and full declarations of the word. But this is apparently done, when those cautions and exhortations are pretended to be so many pregnant evidences, that a true believer may fall from a state of grace; or when they are reckon'd plain indications, that God hath made no absolute decree, or promise, that he shall not do so ^s.

However, it may be an happy means of preserving us from the bad influence of such a mistaken interpretation, if we carefully observe how much the scriptures abound with promises of this kind, as I have shewn in my former discourse, under the general proof of the point. But, for the further confirmation of the argument, which has now been insisted upon, I shall here add a few remarks concerning the promises of salvation made to believers.

^s Dr. Whitby's Discourse, Pag. 417.

[1.] The salvation which is promised must be meant of an eternal salvation. Accordingly when Christ says, "He that believeth in me, shall never die^h;" and "he that believeth, shall be savedⁱ;" the meaning is, such shall be blest'd with eternal life, with eternal salvation.

[2.] These promises are made to believers as such. They respect not the strength or the high degree of faith, but the truth of it; and are therefore applicable to persons upon their first entrance into a state of grace. The denomination of the persons to whom they belong, is founded on that change of state, and on those vital actings of the new creature, which are common to all who are born again. He that has been quicken'd and enabled to perform those essential actings of faith, which relate to the receiving Christ, as the Lord his righteousness and strength, is truly a believer, and, in this sense, as much a believer, as he who has had a farther growth in grace; and consequently they that are weak in faith, have the same interest in the promise, as they that are strong.

[3.] These promises comprehend an inseparable connexion between true faith and eternal salvation. This must be granted; or the

^h John xi. 26.

ⁱ Mark xvi. 16.

absolute truth of the proposition, in which the promise is contain'd, must be denied. If the possibility of a believer's missing of salvation must be allow'd, the absoluteness of the truth of the promise will be destroy'd; for it might then be said, He that believeth may not be saved. And were it certain that any believers would, in fact, fall from grace, and perish at last, it might be indifferently affirmed, with equal truth, some believers shall be saved, and some shall not. The construction that might then be put upon the proclamation of grace, and grant of salvation made to believers in the promise, would amount to little more than this: He that believeth may be saved. The matter would thus rest upon probability only; and what does so, may never come to pass. Thus, according to the scheme which pleads for a possibility of falling from grace, the salvation of believers is reduced to an uncertainty at least. But this is what the style of several of the promises will by no means admit of; which run thus: "He that believeth shall not come into condemnation^k:" "He shall not be confounded^l:" "He shall not be ashamed^m." No such interpretation of the promises as that scheme requires, can suit with the language of scripture in this affair,

^k John v. 24.^l 1 Pet. ii. 6.^m Rom. ix. 33.

or support the certainty of those glorious declarations, which tell us, that they who believe are “passed from death unto lifeⁿ ;” that “he that hath the Son hath life^o ;” yea, “he that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life^p ;” “and these things have I written unto you, that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life^q.” It follows, that,

[4.] These promises of salvation must be understood to give an assurance of the believer’s final perseverance.

Just as when God promised Abraham^r, that his seed should inherit the land of Canaan, he did thereby engage to give Abraham a seed, to raise up his posterity, and protect them through all surrounding dangers, till they were put into the possession of the promised land. In like manner, by God’s promising salvation to believers, he engages for every thing necessary to its being obtained ; and a final perseverance in grace, being, as all allow, indispensably necessary thereunto, his promise of salvation must be construed to carry in it an inviolable engagement for that in particular.

Let these considerations be duly weighed, and it will appear to be wrong in any to

ⁿ John v. 24.

^o 1 John v. 12.

^p John iii. 36.

^q 1 John v. 13.

^r Gen. xvii. 8.

make the believers, continuing in faith, such a condition of his salvation, as shall render this a matter of suspense, or his falling from grace, a thing that is possible. The solemn engagements of the Lord himself being an infallible security for the one, and an immoveable guard against the other.

Hence it appears that believers have good reason to remain unshaken in their holy confidence ; that when God has once put his covenant-fear into the hearts of any, such shall not be suffer'd to depart from him^t ; no, but he who has infused the principle of grace, will preserve it, cause it to spring, and make it thrive ; for he has promised “ to be as the dew unto Israel: He shall grow as the lilly, and cast forth his root as Lebanon^t. ”

Nor should we suffer these, or the like promises to be wrested out of our hands, nor our souls to be deprived of the comfort of them, though it should be suggested that those words did respect a national blessing ; since their particular and special application to the case of every believer is warranted by our Lord himself, where he says, “ For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance^v. ” As likewise by the profess'd declaration of

^t Jer. xxxii. 40.

^t Hof. xiv. 5.

^v Matt. xiii 12.

the design of his coming, which was not only that his people “ might have life, but that they might have it more abundantly ^w. ”

And, through a becoming faith in the immutability and certainty of these and many other promises and declarations of the word, we may be assured that no true believer ever did, or ever shall, fall from a state of grace ; but, in what happy soul soever the good work is once begun, it shall be carried on and compleated.

As a farther proof of this, let us proceed to another head of argument, proposed to be insisted upon ; namely,

2. The Redeemer’s care over his people, together with his peculiar relation unto, and union with them.

I shall consider this head distinctly under two branches ; and shall take notice,

(1.) Of Christ’s care over his people.

Several of the titles given to the Mediator, are such as denote a charge or trust committed to him ; as where he is term’d “ God’s Servant ^x ; ” “ the Messenger of the covenant ^y ; ” “ the Apostle and High Priest of our profession ^z, ” &c. When our Lord was upon earth, he constantly acknowledged that he acted, as Mediator, by commission from his Father ; that he

^w John x. 10.

^x Isaⁱ. xlii. 1.

^y Mal. iii. 1.

^z Heb. iii. 1.

“ came down from heaven, not to do his own will, but the will of him that sent him ^a.” Now the purport of his commission is sum’d up by himself, when he says, “ This is the Father’s will, which hath sent me ; that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day ^b.” That his people might have the comfort of knowing that their salvation was included in his charge, when he repeats the declaration in the next verse ; he varies his terms, saying, “ This is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life ^c ;” i. e. may certainly have it. This was the design of the trust committed to him.

But for this, even for the whole of it, did he engage, when he said, “ I will raise him up at the last day ^d.” And his positive engagement ; for that event must imply an engagement for his peoples final perseverance in grace ; this being of such absolute necessity, that without it they could not be raised to life everlasting. Now we may strongly argue, from our Saviour’s faithfulness, that as he will never suffer any to pluck his people out of

^a John vi. 38.

^b Ver. 39.

^c Ver. 40.

^d Ver.

his hand, so neither will he suffer them to fall out of it, through any folly or madness of their own. He has expressly said, concerning his sheep, " I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish ; neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." After this, should it ever happen that any of his flock did perish, it would equally slur the glory of his word, whether their destruction was effected by an open enemy, or by something in themselves. Besides, it was their proneness to wander from God ; that was one special reason of the Father's appointing, and of Christ's undertaking the office of a Shepherd to watch over them. And if, after all his special and his solemn engagements for their safety, they should any of them perish at last, then the honour of his office and the glory of his faithfulness must fall to the ground. But this we are sure can never be.

This text then does strongly conclude for the doctrine of the saints perseverance : And this will appear more fully still ; if we observe that the words must be understood to respect the safety of Christ's sheep, in their passage through this wilderness ; for it would by no means suit with the perfection and glory of heaven to apply the

declaration in the latter part of the verse, "Neither shall any pluck them out of my hand," to the saints in that state, as some would have it. Since no unclean thing can so much as enter into the New Jerusalem, we may be confident no daring adversary can ever appear there to make so bold an attempt. This shews that all propriety of interpretation would be lost, should Christ's promise to blast all attempts for his peoples ruin be understood to relate to those upper regions, in which no such attempts can possibly be made.

We may farther observe, that though, in the beginning of the verse, Christ speaks of his giving his sheep eternal life; yet even this expression will be of no service to determine, as the same persons would have it, that the security there promised must be defer'd till the saints shall come to the uninterrupted felicity of the world above. For this passage may be understood of Christ's effectually calling his people into a state of grace, and of his bringing them into the real enjoyment of communion with God; and thus of his giving them the beginning of eternal life, even in this world. Such an explication would be very agreeable to matters of fact, and consonant to other places, where it is said, "He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life;" and then all pretence for understanding

derstanding the safety promised in the text, to relate principally to the heavenly state, would be wholly precluded. But granting the phrase should here be understood of the future blessedness, it will then shew us what shall certainly be the result and issue of our Saviour's present care over his flock, but will still be far from suggesting that his sheep must first be received into glory, before they shall share in his protection.

Thus you see, that notwithstanding all the endeavours of some to bear down the testimony of this scripture, yet, upon a fair construction, and due consideration of it, we might venture the proof of our doctrine to rest upon its single evidence.

(2.) I shall next take notice of Christ's relation to the saints, and his union with them.

Each of these particulars would bear a distinct consideration ; but, since the blessings themselves are inseparable, I shall blend them together under this head, and briefly shew in what light these things are set in the word of God, and what deductions pertinent to our present subject may be drawn from them.

There are many images made use of in scripture, by which the nearness of this relation, and the strictness of this union, are represented. The places in which they
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are contained, are abundantly known : Such, for instance, as these, where it is said, for the comfort and encouragement of the church, that “ her Maker is her Husband ^f ;” “ her Saviour is her Head ^g .” And this not in a political sense, merely as a prince is the head of his subjects, but in allusion to the natural sense of the word. Accordingly believers are expressly term’d the “ members of Christ’s body, of his flesh, and of his bones ^h .” Again, he is said to be “ the vine, they the branches ⁱ .”

From such passages and comparisons as these, I apprehend, we may justly infer that there cannot be a stricter union between any two things in the world, than there is between Christ and his people. Farther, that this union respects every particular believer. And in consequence hereof he has such a communion with Christ, as will infallibly secure his standing in grace. All the saints having communion with Christ in his death, their iniquities, by which the presence of God, and the renewed supplies and succours of his grace are forfeited, shall be pardoned. He being wounded for their transgressions, and the chastisement of their peace being laid upon him, by his stripes they are and shall

^f Isai. liv. 5.
xv. 5.

^g Eph. v. 23.

^h Ver. 30.

ⁱ John

be healed. Thro' the virtue of his death then, all the blessings of the covenant are properly constituted and confirmed to be the sure mercies of David. Again, having communion with him in his life, he, who is their Head of righteousness, is also their Head of vital influence, from whom strength is derived, according to his effectual working in every part of his mystical body; and this communication shall be according to the measure that is best suited to answer every design intended by their present establishment and final salvation.

Nothing short of the believer's expectation, and assured hope of this salvation at last, can be a proper return for some of Christ's last breathings; when he said to his disciples, for the encouragement and comfort of all his people, "Because I live, ye shall live also ^k." Which words are a just foundation, whereupon to build an assurance that believers can no more fall from their relation to Christ, and that state of grace into which he has called them, than Christ himself can be pluck'd out of his throne, or fall from his glory.

Some, indeed, would insinuate, that though his people shall never perish, thro' any defect on his part, for he will be faithful to them while they abide faithful to

^k John xiv. 19.

him; yet believers, being not natural, but mystical members, may therefore cut off themselves, and so perish. But to this, and all suggestions of the like kind, I think, a just and full reply may be given from the truths we have now advanced; for Christ's headship is not an empty title; nor are his relations mere insignificant names, but these are eminently fill'd up with that divine affection, tenderness, and compassion, which infinitely transcends the highest degree of love and pity that can be found with the nearest and dearest relations in the world. We may therefore conclude, that a woman, yea, that the most tender and affectionate among women, may sooner forget her sucking child, and, through want of compassion to the fruit of her body, neglect either the food or medicines necessary for its nourishment and preservation, than Christ can forget or forsake any of his members¹. There can be no room to doubt but he will be ever mindful of them, to uphold and establish them, "forgiving all their iniquities, and healing all their diseases^m."

Were we to consider Christ as a Shepherd only, we might, from thence, infer the perpetual security, and eternal safety, of all his people; for should his sheep fall

¹ Isai. xlix. 15.

^m Psal. ciii. 3.

as the prey of wolves, or as the spoil of robbers, or should they perish through a spreading scab, or their own wanderings, the damage and loss would be still the same. We may be confident therefore not a sheep of his shall perish by one of these means, more than by another.

But, when we consider the nearness of believers to Christ, as they are his mystical body, and thus the beloved parts of himself, we have then the strongest assurance possible that they shall ever be preserved; for what man, in his right mind, did ever yet hate his own flesh, or suffer the meanest part of himself to mortify and perish, when it was in his power to prevent it? We may be sure then Christ will never suffer any of the saints to fall finally or totally, while their union with him does remain. And that this shall continue ever, is plain, from the resemblance which it bears to the eternal union between his Father and himself; which resemblance is supposed and refer'd to by Christ, when, praying for his people, he says, "That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I thee;" and again, "that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me ⁿ." And this resemblance lies particularly in the perpe-

ⁿ John xvii. 21, 22.

tual and endless duration of the union. This everlasting union between Christ and his people, stands then as a firm and constant support of the invincible perseverance of all the saints.

There is one argument more, which remains to be consider'd ; and that is taken from,

3. The inhabitation and constant residence of the Spirit of God in the souls of believers.

That the Spirit of God is given to every believer, may be proved from those words of the apostle, “ If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his ^o.” All true disciples of Christ partake not only of the gifts, but of the graces of the Spirit. This is evident, in that he quickens them ^p; they are born of the Spirit ^q, and led by the Spirit ^r, and do share in those graces of faith, love, meekness, &c. which are the fruits of the Spirit ^s.” I need not stay to insist upon this, nor to shew that where he does constantly reside in any, these shall be enabled to endure to the end. All this, I presume, will be allowed.

That which my argument does more immediately oblige me to prove, is the constancy of his abode in the hearts of his

^o Rom. viii. 9.

^r Rom. viii. 14.

^p John vi. 63.

^s Gal. v. 22.

^q Chap. iii. 5.

people. And for this, I think, we have a strong proof in our Saviour's request, which is equivalent to a promise; "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you ^t." That the benefit of this request belongs to all the saints, appears from hence, because the discriminating mark here applied to the disciples, did not distinguish them from other true believers, but only from the men of the world. I may add, the very mark by which they are described is found upon every true believer, distinguishing him from the world, as really as it did the disciples themselves; for all believers have a saving knowledge of the Spirit, and an experimental acquaintance with him in his gracious dealings, and sanctifying operations. We may therefore be assured he dwells in them, and abides with them for ever.

But, in opposition to this, we are told, that they who have been the temple of God, by virtue of his Spirit's dwelling in them, may so corrupt this temple, as to

^t John xiv. 16, 17.

be destroy'd ; that they may provoke the Spirit wholly to depart to their utter ruin : For the proof of this, these words of the apostle are quoted ; “ If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy v.”

To set this matter in a true light, we are to remember that the temple of God, even in its metaphorical sense, when applied to the saints, falls under a twofold consideration. Sometimes it is to be understood of the saints collectively ; at other times, it is meant of them as distributively consider'd. In the former sense, by the temple of God is meant a gospel church ; in the latter, a particular believer.

Now, in the place that is quoted, the apostle speaks of the saints collectively, as builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit ; this we may learn from his own expressions, where he says, “ Know ye not that ye are the temple of God ;” again, which “ temple ye are w ;” where, it is plain, he speaks of them collectively, because the word “ temple,” in the singular number, is joined with a pronoun personal in the plural. This must be allowed then, that by the temple, is there meant a church of Christ.

Next let us see what is meant by defiling this temple of God. To this purpose,

v I Cor. iii. 17.

w Ver. 16, 17.

we must observe what the apostle had been treating of in the preceding verses. From the tenth to the sixteenth verse, he shews the different event of the ministry of different persons; particularly in the fifteenth verse, he signifies the unhappy consequence of the labours of some, who, tho' they were right in the foundation, yet were very wrong in the superstructure. After this, he immediately proceeds to shew the certain destruction of men of corrupt minds, who have no regard, either that their preaching, or that their own souls, might be built upon Christ, the sure foundation. And then declares, that if any man defile, or, as it is in the margin, if he corrupt, the temple; that is, the church of God, either by such error in doctrine, such superstition or innovations in worship, or by any such vile practices, as deface the beauty of the church, or threaten the destruction and overthrow of the church-state it self, such a one would God destroy.

This I take to be a fair explication of the text, which, at once, sets aside all that has been advanced from it, in opposition to the argument that we are upon: For no colourable objection can be raised from it, against the Spirit's constant and perpetual residence in the souls of his people, but upon a supposition, that the person who defiles

the temple of God, is a true believer, and thus himself a temple of the Holy Ghost; whereas no supposition of this kind is contained in the apostle's representation of the case. On the contrary, he intimates, that the man who is supposed to defile the temple, is in such a state of ignorance and darkness, and such a stranger to any experimental acquaintance with Christ, the foundation, as can never be allowed concerning any true believer; nay further, that he is guilty of that self-deceit, of that craftiness and carnal policy, and of those vain thoughts which are altogether inconsistent with the Spirit's dwelling in him*. So that this text, when rightly opened, gives not the least countenance to the notion, "That they who have been the temple of God by virtue of his Spirit's dwelling in them, may so corrupt themselves, as to be destroy'd."

As to any farther pretended plea for the Spirit's total departure, taken from the defilements which they may possibly contract, who are, indeed, his temple; I think, a sufficient reply might be given, from what we have already proved out of the sacred writings under the last head, concerning the abiding union between Christ and his people. But I shall add, that if all the

* 1 Cor. iii. 18, 19.

rebellions committed by them, while they were in their natural state, could not hinder the Spirit's approach, nor exclude them from the benefit of his entrance at their regeneration, then sure no miscarriage, committed after their effectual calling, shall cause him wholly to depart, and leave them, his continuance being secured through the redemption of Christ and his intercession ; " For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled we shall be saved by his life ".

This point then of the Spirit's constant residence in the hearts of his people, stands firm, against all opposition, and, in consequence thereof, the doctrine of the saints final perseverance remains unshaken ; for how shall the Spirit abide, as the Paraclete, Advocate, or Comforter of his people, unless he continues to be their Sanctifier ? And since his constant residence is promised under all those characters, we may be confident his people can never fall from grace.

Thus I have gone through all the arguments proposed for the defence of this doctrine, though not all that might have been brought ; for I thought it better to give what I have produced, a full confide-

ration, than by mentioning more, to have prevented my setting these in so clear and strong a light, as I was firmly perswaded their matter would bear. And I would hope, that the great truths which I have thus collected from scripture, concerning the immutability of the purpose and promise of God, concerning the Redeemer's care over his people, with his peculiar relation unto and union with them, and concerning the constant abode and inhabitation of the Spirit in the souls of believers, will be of sufficient weight to settle the judgment, and establish the faith of the saints in this important article. And I would humbly trust, that, through the blessing of God, they may be the happy means of promoting the comfort and joy of believers, though they should fail of success, as to the conviction of those who are otherwise minded, which yet is what I heartily wish, and shall earnestly pray for.

But, that this may be effected, there remains a further expedient now to be used: And thus I pass on to the last general head; under which,

III. I shall make a reply to the principal objections, which, some apprehend, forbid their assent to the doctrine of the saints perseverance, as it has been here stated and asserted.

At my entrance upon this part of my work I must observe that our doctrine being founded upon the most express and full declarations of scripture, I shall not think my self obliged to take much notice of any objections that are not grounded upon some passage in the word of God, and thus seem in the judgment of the objector to be countenanced by divine authority. Accordingly I shall wave a nice consideration of the metaphysical and abstruse reasonings of those who are for pressing this and other points of divine Revelation, with the difficulties which in their sentiments attend the reconciling the predetermination and absolute decree of God with the liberty of man as a free agent. Besides, this controversy, as I apprehend, more properly belongs to another topick, and is usually handled by those that treat of the decrees and foreknowledge of God. It cannot therefore justly demand to be particularly consider'd here.

As to all objections then of this kind, which would insinuate, that to ground the infallibility of the saints perseverance in grace upon the divine decree, is to give up the freedom of man's will, I shall only answer in general, that tho' the counsel and purpose of God, respecting the salvation of his people, be peremptory and absolute, and shall be infallibly accomplished, as 'tis de-

clared in the promise ; yet the decree of God doth not offer any violence to the will of man, nor take away the liberty or contingency of second causes. For it is sufficient unto human liberty, that a man acts without constraint, and out of choice. And is it not thus with the saints as to their perseverance in grace? Is not the new nature in them an overflowing spring of holy desires? Don't they act freely in the exercise of every grace, whether of faith or repentance, of hope or love? Is not the frame which disposes their souls for these spiritual actings, the happy temper which they choose? Is it not what they daily pray for? When obtain'd, is not the experience of it most delightful? And don't they esteem it as matter of the greatest thankfulness? Wherein then can there be any infringement of the liberty of the will, or any force to be complain'd of?

And as to the most difficult parts of their holy walk, even those which require the severest acts of self-denial, such as the mortification of sin, and the trying duties of humility, patience, and the forgiveness of enemies, don't they enter upon these with the most mature deliberation, and with the firmest resolution? Are not all performed with chearfulness? Or is it not their grief and burden, that they cannot engage herein with the utmost vigour of
soul,

soul, and the greatest readiness? How is there any necessity then imposed upon them? Or what constraint are they under? None sure, unless it be that of love to a Saviour, and desire to be conformed to his image. Or that of gratitude to their heavenly Father, with an holy breathing after the enjoyment of his presence, both here and hereafter. And is it losing their liberty to be under the powerful influence of such a blessed constraint as this, if it must be call'd a constraint. As the liberty of the will is entirely preserv'd in the things we have now mention'd, so there are no farther instances belonging to the saints perseverance in grace, that can be produced, by which it is more likely the destruction or loss of their freedom could be proved.

Upon the whole then, it may as well be said, that there is no liberty in the pure actings of the saints or angels in heaven, who love, and cannot but love, admire and adore our Saviour, and our God, as to say that the holy actings of believers upon earth are not free and voluntary. We conclude therefore, that tho' the decree which appoints the believers salvation, includes these things as means necessary thereunto; and that tho' this decree being effectual, independent, and immutable, does establish such a certainty of the event, with respect
both

both to the means and the end, as renders it impossible that either should fail ; yet the saints freedom in acting is not destroy'd thereby. No, no more than the liberty of human action in eating or drinking is destroy'd by the decree which fixes the number of a man's days ^z, which appoints the necessary means of his support, and which effectually secures the use thereof, till the determined period of his life approaches ; or, in the language of Job, till he shall accomplish as an hireling his day ^a.

I shall now consider the objections taken from scripture. But I don't think it necessary for me to speak distinctly to every portion of scripture, from which objections have been raised: I shall select a few of those which are generally supposed to be of the greatest moment ; and in my remarks upon these I shall endeavour to hint such things as may serve for an answer to the like objections when taken from any other. And here let me remind you, that I think it but just to make such an application of the distinctions we have settled, when the point was stated, as the course of our reasoning

^z If any shall question whether God has determined the bounds of the life of man, they may find this matter clearly discussed, and the truth of the affirmative well established and abundantly confirmed from scripture, in Mr. Ridgley's *Body of Divinity*. Vol. I. pag. 256—260.

^a Job xiv. 5, 6.

shall now require, without adding any thing farther for their confirmation.

I shall now propose the objections which are to be consider'd, and shall sum them up under these three heads.

1. Some are taken from the instances of apostacy recorded in scripture.

2. Other objections are taken from the threatnings of the word, in case of apostacy.

3. Others again are taken from the commands and exhortations, from the cautions and directions which frequently occur in the inspir'd writings.

1. I shall consider the objections taken from the instances of apostacy, recorded in scripture.

All objections of this kind do constantly proceed from a mistake in one of these two things.

(1.) In taking a partial backsliding for a total apostacy.

(2.) Or else in taking a falling from the doctrines of the gospel, and a profession of religion, for a falling from a state of grace.

(1.) In some of these objections a partial backsliding is mistaken for a total apostacy. This is the case when many of the precious saints of the Lord, who were the excellent of the earth, are thrust into the dead list of total apostates. The three that are commonly pointed out upon this occasion are
David,

David, Solomon and Peter. As to Peter, we have already proved that his Faith did not totally fail, for he who was always heard had pray'd it should not ^b.

As to David likewise, we have sufficient reason to believe that his grace did not fail totally, and that the Spirit of God did never wholly depart from him; if we observe that upon his recovery from his back-sliding, when he was in his most penitential frame, and must be supposed to have had the most just sense of his condition, even then, tho' he pleaded that God would "restore unto him the joy of his salvation" ^c; for this he had lost, yet we never read of his praying that God would restore unto him his Spirit, a plain intimation, that his presence and residence was never totally lost. David knew indeed that he had incurr'd the forfeiture, and therefore he pleads, "take not thine holy Spirit from me" ^d. But his very language in this petition, supposes that the Spirit did still continue with him. And here I would observe by the way, that since the Spirit was not taken from David under all the provocations which attended the falls there confess'd and lamented, we have no reason to imagine that he is taken from any other in

^b Luke xxii. 32.

^c Psal. li. 12.

^d Ver. 11.

whose heart he has once dwelt as a Spirit of grace and regeneration.

Finally, as to the instance of Solomon, tho' the account we have of him be but short, yet there are some passages in his story, which make his case look more like a partial backsliding, than a total apostacy. For how strongly soever this be express'd, still by its being said, " his heart " was not perfect with the Lord his God, " as was the heart of David his father, " and that he " went not fully after the " Lord, as did David; " it seems as if the scriptures intended that his declension should be understood of an abatement of his former zeal, and not of a total apostacy. This is confirmed by what we meet with in another place, where the people that set their hearts to seek the Lord God of Israel, and thus strengthened the kingdom of Judah, are said to have walked in the way of David and Solomon.^e " Whereby 'tis at least intimated, that as to the general course of Solomon's walk, his way was the same with that of David: And since the way of both is there mention'd with a mark of divine approbation, and that after their death, we may conclude, that they both began and ended well, and that notwithstanding their gross backli-

^e 1 Kings xi. 4.

^f Ver. 6.

^g 2 Chr. xi. 17.

dings;

dings; yet they were neither of them guilty either of a final or total apostacy.

(2.) This objection drawn from the various instances of apostacy, is sometimes founded upon a mistake in another thing, *viz.* The taking a falling from the doctrines of the gospel, and a profession of religion, for a falling from a state of grace.

That there have been instances of apostacy with respect to the doctrines of the gospel, is a sad truth abundantly confirmed by the testimony of former and latter times. Thus some of the Galatians after they had received the knowledge of the way of salvation by the righteousness of Christ alone, turned back to their old notions. And seeking again to be justified by the law, they are said to have "fallen from grace,"^h *i. e.* from the doctrine of grace.

Thus we read of others, who concerning the truth have erred, of whom was Hymeneus and Philetus, who by their influence and example, overthrew the faith of some.ⁱ So that none ever pretend to deny but a doctrinal faith may be and frequently is overthrown. But this is very far from proving that the faith of true believers, which is the operation of

^h Gal. v. 4.

ⁱ 2 Tim. ii. 18.

God, and which worketh by love, can ever be eradicated.

Nay, tho' it is allowed that some men, when they have fallen from the doctrines of the gospel, and changed their opinion, did likewise desert the apostles, and even abandon the ways of God; yet such instances as these, how numerous soever, can't give the least strength to the objection.

Because 'tis declar'd by an inspir'd apostle, they were not of us, tho' they went out from us ^k. Here's a plain intimation that the persons who went out from the Church, were really different from true believers: And wherein did the difference lie, not so much in any thing that was external, as in the internal frame and disposition of their minds, or the inward state and relation of their souls towards God. They were of the society and visible fellowship of the saints, of the same profession with them, they shared in many of the like gifts of the Spirit, and engag'd in the same worship with them. But still they wanted the gracious anointing from the holy one, ^l which true believers had received, and which did abide in them that received it.

^k 1 Joh. ii. 19.

^l Ver. 20.

But

But a late writer, to prove that true believers themselves may fall from grace, has quoted the passage which follows the apostles charge to Timothy, holding faith and a good conscience, which some having put away, concerning faith have made shipwrack^m. In his arguing upon the place, he tells us, that to put away a good conscience, belongs to them alone who once had it.

But the proper signification of the original wordⁿ intimates no such thing, but rather that they always refus'd it: As appears from the use of the verb in several other places. Particularly, where the Jews are said to put away the gospel, which they never received; but oppos'd with contradiction and blasphemy^o. The same word is used concerning the Israelites, who put away Moses, or thrust him from them, and would not obey^p. In like manner, when God in his gospel had set before these apostates the way of obtaining a good conscience, they refused to hearken, and thus might properly be said to put away a good conscience, tho' they never had it; because they refus'd to accept that righteousness and grace which only could have produced it.

^m 1 Tim. i. 19. ⁿ ἀποσάμενοι. ^o Acts xiii. 46.
ἐπειδὴ ὃ ἀποθέσθαι αὐτὸν.
^p Acts vii. 39. ὃ ἐκ ἡθελήσας ὑπὸ τοῦ λαοῦ ἀποστρέφειν, ἀλλ' ἀπώσαντο.

All objections therefore against our doctrine, founded upon such instances as these of Hymenæus and his associates, proceed upon a mistake, in imagining these to have had true grace who had it not.

Nor will the passage in the epistle of Peter ^a, which some have laid a mighty stress upon, prove that the professors, who fell away, were truly sanctified. The apostle, indeed, speaks of some “who had escaped the pollutions of the world;” yea, “were clean escaped from them who lived in error,” and tells us, these “were again entangled therein,” and that “the latter end was worse with them than the beginning;” for after “they had known the way of righteousness, they turned from the holy commandment deliver’d unto them.” Several remarks might be made to shew that all which is here spoken of these persons, is far from amounting to a proof that they were truly sanctified; but this will be determined at once, if we observe how the apostle applies to them the proverb which he uses in the last verse of the chapter; by which it plainly appears, that how much soever they were reformed, as to their outward conversation, yet their hearts were never changed. Under all their reformation, they still retained their old

^a 2 Pet. ii. 18—22.

beastial nature. They were always dogs, but were never the children of God ; they were always swine, and never the true sheep of Christ.

Such instances as these, though frequently urged for this purpose, are far from proving that true believers have apostatiz'd. I proceed,

2. Some objections are taken from the threatnings of the word.

Many, indeed, are the threats which God has denounced against those who shall fall away, and who shall not continue steadfast in their faith, and in their obedience to the end. Hence some have argued, that it is possible for the saints themselves to fall from grace ; for they think a threat of that which cannot possibly befall us, is irrational ; and that God himself should threaten what his own decree and promise has render'd impossible, they say, is very difficult to believe.

But the difficulty, I apprehend, may be removed, if we consider that many events, which were possible in their own nature, do, by reason of the infallible guard, set by the divine determination, become impossible, not in themselves, but with regard to the immutability of the decree and promise of God. Now that God should threaten that which was possible in it self, and that which the circumstances, relation,
and

and tendency of things consider'd, was likely to happen; and that moreover, which, the divine purpose and promise abstracted, would certainly come to pass, is neither irrational to suppose, nor difficult to believe; especially when we remember that the truth of this is confirmed by matter of fact, in the story of Paul and his company; an instance as full to our purpose, as the argument could require: For, in their case, we may observe, the decree and promise of God had pass'd, that there should "be no loss of any man's life among them, but of the ship only".

An angel was sent to inform Paul God had "given him all them that sailed with him". This promise then ascertain'd the safety of the company, and render'd the loss of their lives an event that was impossible; as must be allowed, if we would not rob God of what he has always challenged and assumed, as his peculiar glory, viz. that his decrees are immutable, and his promises infallible; and yet their destruction, or the loss of their lives, the very thing which God had infallibly promised, should not befall them, was threaten'd, when Paul said, "Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved". Here then was a threat of that which God's own decree and pro-

^r Acts xxvii. 22.

^r Ver. 23.

^r Ver. 31.

mise had render'd impossible. And it shews threats of destruction, in case of apostacy, to be of no force to prove, as some have pretended, that there is no decree or promise to render the saints perseverance in grace so secure and infallible, as to make their falling from grace a thing impossible.

Some threatnings are likewise turned to a wrong use, in being made to relate directly and immediately to true believers, though it does not appear, from their context, that this was at all intended. I shall name two places, which have been remarkably misconstrued this way; one is, that in the prophecy of Ezekiel ^v: “But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned, in his trespass, that he hath trespassed, and in his sin, that he hath sinned, in them shall he die?” It is but just, I apprehend, that our interpretation of this text should be regulated by a distinction between a ceremonial or moral righteousness, and that which is truly evangelical and spiritual. A foundation for this distinction may be observed in Paul’s ex-

^v Ezek. xviii. 24.

pression; where he declares of himself, “that touching the righteousness which is in the law, he was blameless ^w ;” and yet at that time, viz. before his conversion, he was a blasphemer and a persecutor, one destitute of true grace. This distinction may be farther confirm’d, from the words of our Saviour, when he tells his disciples, “Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven ^x.” And if, according to this distinction, the threat be applied, as it ought, to persons that had only a ceremonial or moral righteousness, then it may be allowed that many such righteous persons did turn from their righteousness, and die in their sins; which is no more than to say, that false professors and mere formalists proved apostates; and this is a case that frequently happens.

But, with a design to overthrow such an explication of the text as this, it has been said, “That if a man should only turn away from his counterfeit and hypocritical righteousness, he should rather live than die, in as much as he would put off the wolf to put on the lamb.” But certainly they were betray’d into an unaccountable weakness who argued after this manner:

^w Philip. iii. 6.

^x Matt. v. 20.

For persons who have kept up an hypocritical profession many years together, may, at length, shake off the very form of religion, and sink into the most vile and open abominations ; and shall this be call'd a putting off the wolf to put on the lamb ? No sure, they only put off the sheep's cloathing, and now appear to be wolves, as they always were, though long disguised.

Another passage in scripture, which has been misconstrued the same way as the former, is that in the epistle to the Hebrews ; where it is said, " For it is impossible for those who were once enlighten'd, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away to renew them again unto repentance *."

Some have pretended, that the persons here spoken of were truly gracious. This ought to be proved, indeed, before the passage can be reasonably urged as an objection against our doctrine ; but since it is not asserted of them, in the text or context, either expressly, or in terms equivalent, that they did believe or perform any other act, which could only flow from the

* Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6.

vital principle of grace, the pretence that they were true believers, can be no more than a bare presumption.

Here it may be ask'd, Does not the sentence, which declares it to be "impossible to renew them again unto repentance," imply that they once had true repentance? I answer: If the phrase be carefully observed, it will appear it does not; for it is not said, it is impossible to renew them unto repentance [again,] but to renew them [again] unto repentance. There is some difference, I apprehend, between these two modes of expression; though the former might have led us to think that they had once been partakers of repentance, yet the latter, which is the expression in the text, intimates no more but that there had been some sort of renovation or change, attended with a profession of religion, and some alteration in their outward conduct. Their illumination and convictions could hardly fail of producing such effects as these; but these may be, and are, frequently wrought where the heart is not changed, or where men are not renewed in the spirit of their mind. Now persons, in those circumstances, may fall from the strictness of their walk, and gradually sink into loose, immoral practices, till, at length, they settle in a course openly wicked and profane. When things are come to this pass,

it is difficult, in all common cases, for such men to be renewed again, even to that sobriety and pureness which formerly adorn'd their conversation.

As to the persons to whom the apostle refers, it is said, indeed, to be impossible to renew them again unto repentance, that is, to bring them to repent of their vile apostacy, “ seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame;” acting herein the like part with those who had the daring impudence to ascribe the divine works of Christ to a diabolical power. Now this being done after their illumination, and in spite of all their convictions, they are supposed to have committed the sin against the Holy Ghost; and then it is no wonder their repentance was declared impossible, though the scriptures never speak of the impossibility of the repentance of any other sort of sinners under the gospel whatever.

From these considerations, we have reason to conclude, notwithstanding all that is contained in this sentence, that these apostates were never truly sanctified. This construction put upon their character, is confirmed by what presently follows, in the ninth verse; “ But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation;” which expression must be understood to exclude the sup-

supposed apostates from having had any share in the special and saving blessings of the new covenant, and does by consequence declare them to have been always void of grace ; so that there is not, in all the passage, the least matter of objection against the perseverance of true believers.

Having thus clear'd up the two places which are generally thought to militate against our doctrine the most directly of all the threatnings, I shall not enter upon a particular examination of any other, but only give a short reply to the objection taken from the words of the apostle, which denounce the sure destruction against the man that shall “ tread under foot the Son of God, and count the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing ^z.” Here the objection supposes that the apostate was the person said to be sanctified : But this supposition is built merely upon a grammatical mistake ; for it is more agreeable to the known rule of construction to apply the relative to the Son of God, its immediate and proper antecedent, who was sanctified or consecrated by the blood of the covenant. This connection of the words being observed, the objection vanishes at once.

^z Heb. x. 29.

Thus if the threatnings, pointed against apostates, were carefully examined, many of the objections, taken from them against the infallibility of the saints perseverance, would be wholly precluded, and the rest would quickly be given up ; for if the expressions by which they are thought to be supported were rightly explained, they would appear to declare no more than the Lord's utter abhorrence of apostacy, and his righteous displeasure and wrath against those who draw back ; but could never be justly construed to signify either that God has not a peculiar people, to whom he is resolved to be gracious, or that they who are once received into the special protection and care of heaven, may yet miss of salvation, and perish at last.

3. Some objections are taken from the commands and exhortations, the cautions and directions, which frequently occur in the sacred writings.

These passages are supposed to be pregnant evidences that true believers may fall from grace, and reckon'd to be so many arguments to prove that God has made no absolute decree, or promise, that they shall not do so. It is said to be unreasonable to conceive that the same Spirit of wisdom should absolutely declare that they shall not fall away, and yet be thus concern'd to guard and caution them against what he

has told them, was as impossible, as that God should fail of performing his promise.

Let this objection be enlarged upon, and strengthen'd to the utmost; yet, after all, it can have no more force against the promises which relate to the saints perseverance, than it would have against those absolute promises, regarding other matters, which are likewise attended with exhortations, instructions, and cautions, respecting the dutiful conduct of the persons concern'd, and given in the name and by the authority of the same God, who had before ascertain'd the event by his promise. Let us then transfer the objection to some particular cases recorded in scripture, and its weakness will soon be discover'd. For instance: Did not the apostle Paul, when he gave the Centurion and soldiers the caution, saying, "Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved ^a," speak by the same Spirit of wisdom, as when he told them before there should be "no loss of any man's life, but of the ship only ^b?" Can we imagine that the vigilance and caution required were an evidence that God had never promised to give the apostle all them that sailed with him? Must we believe that the destruction of some of that

^a Acts xxvii. 31.

^b Ver. 22.

company might have happen'd, though a God of infinite faithfulness had engaged there should be no loss of any man's life among them? Did the apostle intend, by his caution, to weaken the credit of the promise? or did the assurance he had given of their safety, render the caution ineffectual? Neither he nor they did thus understand things in that affair: Why then should they be thus interpreted in the case before us? Finally, would it not be a vain, not to say a wild construction of the apostle's caution about keeping the mariners in the vessel, to understand it as telling the Centurion and soldiers, that it highly concerned them to fear, lest the God of truth should be unfaithful to his promise? Yet some have pretended, that if an absolute promise for the safety of believers be granted, nothing short of this must be the construction we are to put upon the cautions and exhortations, whereby they are directed and quicken'd to their duty. But, sure, they that are influenced by the sentiments and conduct of the inspired writers, can never agree to the perverse turn of such extravagant insinuations.

Again, In what stronger terms can the certainty of an event be fix'd, than was that of Solomon's building the temple? and yet with what a variety of cautions and commands, of exhortations, instructions
and

and prayers, was the revelation of this absolute decree followed by David, who had received the promise, and did believe the certainty of its accomplishment? His expressions, upon that occasion, are very remarkable and direct to our purpose; they appear in the strongest light in 1 Chron. chap. xxii. from ver. 6. throughout.

There are other passages; as the angel's directions and cautions to Lot in particular, which look with the same unfavourable aspect upon these objections, and might be produced to shew, that as exhortations, cautions, and commands, are not, in those cases, made unnecessary by the absolute promise and unchangeable decree of God, so it is unreasonable in any to attempt, by these exhortations, &c. to vacate the promise, or annul the decree.

As to the perseverance of the saints, tho' the certainty thereof be declared in the promise, yet the justness and propriety of all the exhortations, &c. of the word relating thereunto, might be made to appear, were we to consider the state of visible churches, how many persons there are having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; and were we also to observe the great imperfection of believers themselves, in this militant state, who have to conflict with innumerable lusts and passions within, as well as the most subtle and
power-

powerful enemies without. These circumstances universally attending, can it seem strange, that, after the strongest assurance of a believer's safety, professors should be warned to "look diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God^c," and content himself with a profession of religion without its principle? or that the disciples should be exhorted "to put on the whole armour of God, that they may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand^d?" Instead therefore of turning such cautions and commands into objections against this doctrine, it seems more agreeable to infer from them, that the heart of the Redeemer is much set upon the salvation of his people; and, considering how frequently they occur, and with what strictness and solemnity they are constantly given, they plainly shew that he does really interest himself in the perseverance of his saints, and is resolved no means shall be neglected, which would help to promote it. His diligence and care in pursuing such methods as these, are but the fruit of the immutability of his purpose to accomplish the design, and of the wisdom of his counsel, to bring it about in a way entirely suited to the nature of man, as a free agent.

^c Heb. xii. 15.^d Eph. vi. 13.

“ Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.” Particularly,

1. Be diligent in the performance of religious duties. They are most likely to grow as the lilly, who are most careful to be where the sun shines, the dew falls, and the Spirit blows ; as new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby. Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation. Look out with care to observe the motion of your enemies, look up with holy confidence for strength against them ; for Christ will bring forth judgment unto victory, but no means or ordinances whatever can do it without him.

2. Endeavour to be much in the exercise of grace. Let your faith be daily fetching in fuel to keep up the flame of love ; let this be so ardent, as to consume pride, and every corruption, that you may walk humbly with your God, and continue patiently looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

3. Cherish the motions of the blessed and holy Spirit. Want of attention to these is the main reason of our daily falls.

4. Shun the very appearance of evil. Observe when you begin to fall, let the smallest

smallest deviations from duty be heartily lamented, and be speedy in pleading with God to restore your souls, and establish your goings.

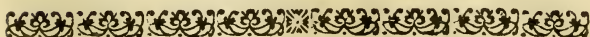
5. Lastly, trust in God to perfect that which concerns you. Trust in the Lord Jesus Christ to manage your cause with God, and to keep all right between him and you by his constant intercession. Trust in the Holy Ghost to manage the cause of God on your heart, to overcome your obstinacy and unbelief, to vanquish temptations, doubts, and fears, and to settle you in hope and comfort; that you may fight the good fight of faith, finish your course with joy, and, at length, receive the crown of righteousness and glory.





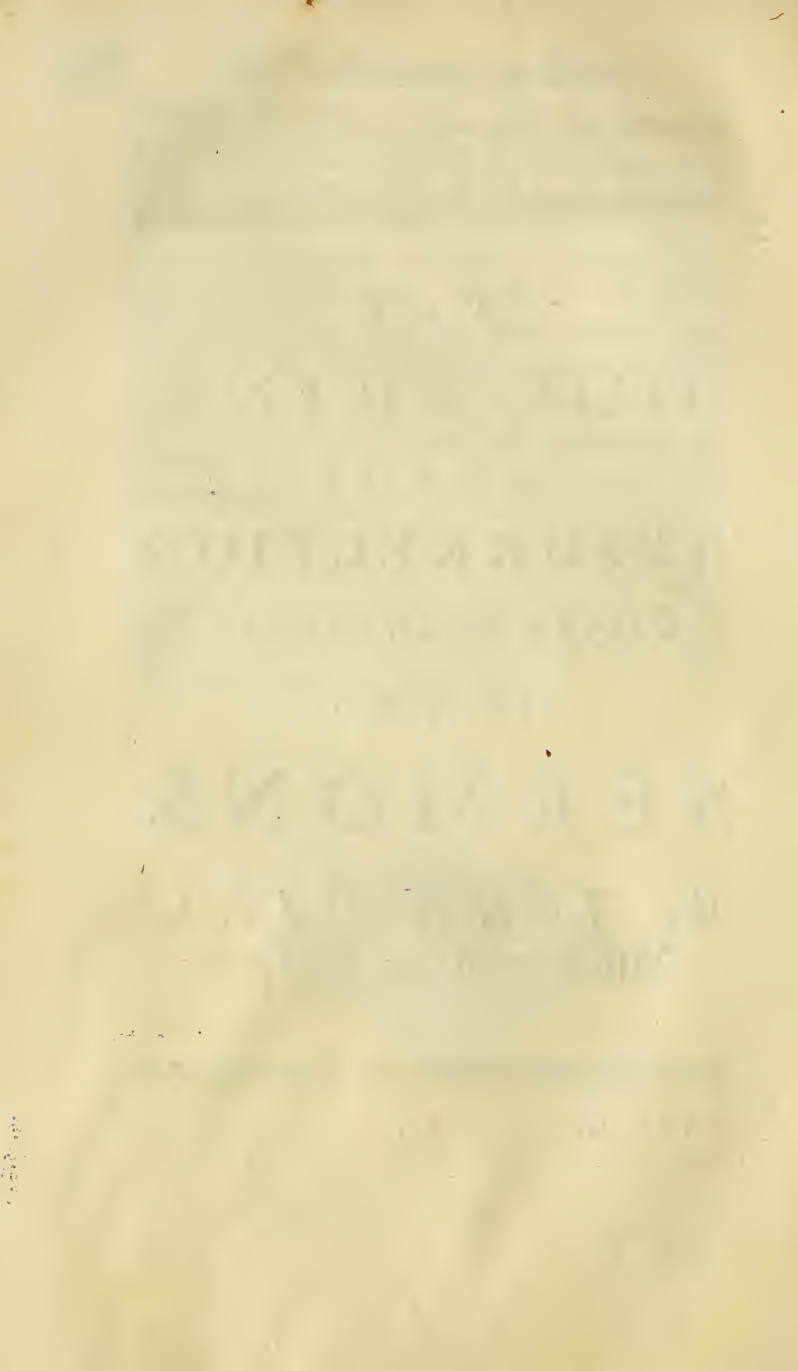
THE
DOCTRINE
OF THE
RESURRECTION
STATED and DEFENDED:
IN TWO
SERMONS.

BY ^{known} JOHN GILL,
Minister of the Gospel.



VOL. II.

B b





S E R M O N I.

ACTS xxvi. 8.

Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?



THE doctrine of the resurrection of the body from the dead, is a doctrine of the utmost importance; for "if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen; and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain ^a." In this Lecture, the doctrines of eternal election, original sin, particular redemption, satisfaction by Christ, efficacious grace in conversion, and final perseverance, have been well explained and defended among you; and, I hope, to your great comfort and establishment: But to what purpose are these truths taught, and of what avail will they be, if there is no resurrection of the dead?

^a 1 Cor. xv. 13, 14.

The part assigned to me, in this Lecture, being to explain and defend this truth, I shall attempt to do it in the following method.

- I. I shall observe that the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead has not been credited by some; it has been accounted incredible.
- II. Notwithstanding, I shall endeavour to evince both the credibility and certainty of it.
- III. I shall enquire who and what that is which shall be raised.
- IV. I shall consider the author of this stupendous work, and the particular concern which God the Father, Son, and Spirit, have therein.
- V. I shall shew the importance and use of this doctrine.

I. It will not be improper to observe, that the doctrine of the resurrection of the body from the dead has not been believed by some, but has been accounted absurd and incredible, tho' without any just reason, as will be shewn hereafter, and as may be concluded from the words of my text.

This doctrine is of pure revelation, what the mere light of nature never taught men, and by which they being only guided, have declared against. It has been denied, as

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Tertullian^b observes, by every Sect of the philosophers. That the body was mortal, all agreed; that the soul was immortal, some of them asserted, though they had but dark and confused conceptions concerning its future separate existence; but that the body, when dead, should be raised again to life, was a subject of ridicule and contempt with them. Pliny^c calls it a childish fancy, vanity, and downright madness; as does also Cæcilius, in Minucius Felix^d, who likewise reckons it among old wives fables. Celsus, in Origen^e, represents it as exceeding detestable and abominable; and, of all the tenets of the

^b Et ut carnis restitutio negetur, de una omnium philosophorum schola sumitur. Tertull. de Praescript. Haereticor. c. 7. p. 232. Ed. Rigalt.

^c Puerilium ista deliramentorum, avidaeque nunquam desinere mortalitatis commenta sunt. Similis & de asservandis corporibus hominum, ac reviviscendi promissa Democrito vanitas, qui non revixit ipse. Quae (Malum) ista dementia est, iterari vitam morte? Plin. Natural. Hist. L. 7. c. 55. Ed. Dalechamp.

^d Nec hac furiosa opinione contenti, aniles fabulas adstruunt & annectunt; renasci se ferunt post mortem & cineres & favillas: & nescio qua fiducia mendaciis suis invicem credunt: putes eos jam revixisse, anceps malum & gemina dementia, coelo & astris, quae sic relinquimus ut invenimus interitum denuntiate, sibi mortuis & extinctis, qui sicut nascimur & interimus aeternitatem repromittere. Minuc. Felix. Octav. p. 10. Edit. Oxon. 1662.

^e ὁ ποτε μηδ' ὑμῶν, τῶτο τὸ δόγμα, καὶ τῶν Χριστιανῶν, ἐνίοις κοινὸν ἔστι καὶ τὸ σφόδρα μισητὸν αὐτῶ καὶ ἀποπύσον αἶμα καὶ ἀδύνατον σφοδρύνει. — ἀλλ' ἔτι γε τὰ αἰσχρὰ ὁ Θεὸς δύναται, ἴδε τὰ ὧρα φύσιν ἐλέει. Apud Orig. L. 3. p. 240. Ed. Spencer.

Christians, this was had in the greatest contempt by Julian ^f the Emperor. The maintainers and abettors of this doctrine were always accounted by the Heathens ^g vain, trifling, and babbling fellows. Thus the Athenian philosophers of the Epicurean and Stoick sects mocked at the apostle Paul, when they heard him talk of the resurrection of the dead; “And some said, what will this babbler say ^h ? Other some, he seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods; because he preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection.” They were so ignorant of this doctrine, that they took Jesus ⁱ and Ἀνάστασις, the word used by the apostle for the resurrection, to be the names of some strange deities they had never heard of before; and therefore say, “he seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods.” The Heathen had no knowledge of this truth, no faith in it, nor hope concerning it. Hence they are described by the apostle Paul, as such who had no hope; when, writing to the Thessalonians ^k, he says, “But I would not have you to

^f “Ὁ ὃ μάλιστα διαγελάει πρὸς τοῖς ἄλλοις ἀπασιν. Cyril. Alex. cont. Jul. L. 7.

^g Καὶ γὰρ πάντες φληνάφους καὶ σπερμολόγους ἡμᾶς νομίσαντες, μᾶλλον ἢ ἐσιν ἡμῖν. Tatian. contr. Graecos Orat. p. 146. Edit. Paris.

^h Ὁ σπερμολόγος ἔστῃ. Acts xvii. 18, 32.

ⁱ Chrysost. in Act. Homil. 38. OEcumen. in loc.

^k 1 Thess. iv. 13, 14.

be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others, which have no hope:" By whom the apostle means not Christians, who had no hopes of the salvation of their departed friends and relations, but Pagans, who had neither faith nor hope in the resurrection of the dead, and a future state, and therefore had not that to support them under the loss of relations as Christians had; wherefore the apostle adds, "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." Much after the same manner the Ephesians, whilst they were in their heathenish and unconverted estate, are described¹ by the same apostle; "At that time, says he, ye were without Christ;" that is, without any knowledge, promise, or expectation of the Messiah; "being aliens from the common-wealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise;" i. e. ye were not so much as profelytes to the Jewish religion, nor members of the Jewish church, and were entirely destitute of divine revelation; "having no hope" in the resurrection and future state, and so lived "without God in the

¹ Eph. ii. 12.

world," or as *Ἀθεοί*, Atheists, in it. And we may be the more induced to believe this to be, at least, part of the apostle's sense in these passages; since he, in his defences before Felix and Agrippa, represents the doctrine of the resurrection as the object of hope, as in Acts xxiv. 15. "And have hope towards God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust." And in Chap. xxvi. 6, 7. "And now I stand and am judged, for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers; unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come; for which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews." And then follow the words of my text, "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?"

Some, indeed, have thought that the Gentiles had knowledge of the resurrection; which they collect partly from some notions and opinions of theirs, which seem to bear a semblance with, and to be the broken remains of some tradition concerning it, and partly from express passages, wherein they think it is asserted. The notions of the Heathen, from whence it is concluded, that they had some hints of
this

this doctrine, are these ^m, viz. that the soul after death has a perfect human shape, and all the same parts, both external and internal, that the body has; that there is an equal duration of the soul and body after death; that there is a transmigration of souls into other bodies, especially human; that men may be translated body and soul to heaven; of which they give instances in Aristaeus the Proconnesian, Alcmena, Hercules, Helena, Romulus, Cleomedes Aftypalensis, and others: And that after certain periods and revolutions, when the stars and planets are in the same configuration and respect to one another, which they formerly had, the same men shall appear in the world, and the same things in succession shall be done in it, which formerly have been. For instance: Socrates ⁿ shall be born at Athens, of the same parents, be educated after the same manner, eat the same food, wear the same cloaths, teach the same philosophy to the

^m See Dr. Hody's *Resurrection of the (same) Body* asserted, &c. p. 3, &c. where these notions of the Heathens are at large treated of. See also Gale's *Court of the Gentiles*, Par. 1. B. 3. c. 7. p. 81, 82. and Par. 2. B. 2. c. 8. p. 189.

ⁿ Origen. *contr. Celsum*, L. 5. p. 244, 245. This was the notion of Pythagoras, Porphyry. in *Vit. Pythag.* p. 188. and of Plato, *Apul. de Philosoph.* L. 1. and of Chrysippus, *Lactant.* L. 7. c. 23. and of Zeno, *Tatian. contr. Graecos*, p. 143. and of Timaeus Locrus, *de anima mundi*, p. 24. Ed. Gale.

self-same scholars, be accused by the same accusers, condemn'd by the same council, and die by the same poison. And so, my friends, according to this notion, we are all to meet together again in this place, in the same position and situation, you to hear, and I to preach; my subject is to be the doctrine of the resurrection, and I am to give you an account of the notions of the Heathen, with respect to it, as I now do. But this notion seems rather expressive of a regeneration, or a new birth, or a reproduction of men and things, than a resurrection of them: And, I must confess, I cannot see what likeness there is between this, or any other of the above-mentioned notions, and the Christian doctrine of the resurrection from the dead.

The passages cited out of Heathen authors, to shew their knowledge of this doctrine, are such as the Greek verses of Phocylides^o; in which he expresses his hopes, that, in a very short time, the reliques of the deceased should come forth out of the earth into light. But this poem is thought, by learned men, not to be the work of the Heathen Phocylides, but ei-

^o 'Ου καλὸν ἀρμονίην ἀναλύμεν ἀνθρώποιο
 καὶ τάχα δ' ἐκ γαίης ἐλπίζομεν εἰς φάος ἐλθεῖν
 λήσαντες ἀπὸ χρομίων ὀπίσω ὃ θεοὶ τελέεονται.

Phocylid. Poem. Admon. L. 97, 98, 99.

ther of some ^p anonymous Christian, or of some ancient ^q Jewish writer. Besides, the verses refer'd to are not so expressed, but that it is thought ^r they may very well be explained, so as to design the Pythagorean transmigration, and not the Christian doctrine of the resurrection. Theopompus and Eudemus Rhodius^t, in Diogenes Laertius, tell us, that it was the opinion of the Persian Magi, “that men should live again, and be immortal:” This they received from their master, and the founder of their sect^t, Zoroastres; who foretold, “that there should be a time when there would be a resurrection

^p Josephus Scaliger ad Eusebium, p. 96.—Scaligeri judicio subscribunt Daniel. Heinsius Exerc. Sacr. ad Heb. iv. 12. & ad Theocritum, p. 20. Huetius demonstrat, Evangel. p. 113. & 608. & Alnetan. Quaest. p. 136. Vossius de Poetis Graecis, p. 22. & de Philosophia, p. 146. Joh. Reiskius, p. 67. de Sibyllinis, Georgius Calixtus de Resurrectione Carnis, §. 6. Marquardus Freherus, p. 64. Parergon: ut Barthium, Taubmannum, aliosque praeteream. Fabricii Biblioth. Graec. L. 2. c. 11. p. 436.

^q Vetusissimi scriptoris Judaei gnomas, sub Phocylidis nomine legi contendit Is. Vossius de Sibyllinis oraculis, c. 5. quae sententia probatur Joh. Fello Oxoniensi Episcopo in notis ad Cypriani Lib. 1. adversus Judaeos, p. 27. Idem.

^r Resurrectionis Dogma, v. 97. seqq; neutiquam ita à Phocylide declaratur ut non possit de metempsychosis exponi. Idem. p. 437.

^t ^q *ὅς καὶ ἀναβιώσεως καὶ τὰς μάγους, φησὶ, τὰς ἀνθρώπους, καὶ ἔσεσθαι ἀθανάτους.* Laert. Proem. ad Vit. Philosoph.

^t *Ὁ δὲ Ζωροάστρης προλέγει, ὡς ἔσαι ποτὲ χρόνον ἐν ᾧ πάντῃ νεκρῶν ἀνάστασις ἔσται.* Aeneas Gazaëus in Theophrasto, p. 77. as cited by Hody.

of all the dead." Nor need this be wonder'd at, since, from the best accounts ^v of him, it appears that he was originally a Jew, both by birth and religion; was a servant to one of the prophets of Israel, and was well versed in the holy scriptures; out of which, without doubt, he took this doctrine, as he did some others, and which he taught his Magi, and adopted into his new religion. It may be more surprizing to hear that Democritus, a corporeal philosopher, should have any notion of the resurrection of the dead; yet Pliny ^w ascribes it to him, and derides him for it; though it has been thought, by some ^x, that he designs another Democritus, and not the philosopher, since this opinion cannot be very easily reconciled to his philosophy. But supposing that he, and not another, is meant, it is easy to observe how he came

^v Vid. Prideaux's Connexion of the History of the Old and New Testament, Par. 1. B. 4. p. 212, 213, 8^{vo}.

^w Natural. Hist. L. 7. c. 55. his words are cited at large in p. 373.

^x Quae apud Plinium 7. Hist. Nat. 55. notatur reviviscendi promissa Democrito vanitas, videtur mihi respicere Democriti dictum ad regem Darium conjugis morte afflictum, quod refert Julianus, Epist. 37. parum enim cum Democriti Philosophia commune habet, neque cum illa facile conciliabitur, quod viri docti ex illo Plinii loco colligunt Democritum à fide Christiana de Resurrectione corporum alienum non fuisse. Fabricii Biblioth. Graec. L. 2. c. 23. p. 779.

by it, seeing he not only ^v lived in Egypt a while, and conversed with the priests there, but travelled also into Persia, and learned of the Magi theology, as well as other things. The notions of several Pagan nations concerning the resurrection, are such as are either ascribed to them by authors not to be depended on, or plainly design a transmigration, or are what they have borrowed from the Jews, either by conversing with them, or by reading of their writings; or else are the broken remains of some tradition, received from their ancestors, originally founded on divine revelation.

Some ^z have argued from the Pagans account of future punishments to their belief of this doctrine; as when they represent Aridæus and other tyrants in hell, bound neck and heels together, their skins flead, and they dragg'd through thorns and briars; when they speak of Sisyphus rolling a stone up hill, which, when he has got to the top of it, revolves upon his hands; of Ixion, fasten'd to a wheel, in continual

^y Οὐτ' ἄρα μάγων τινῶν δίκηκεσε, καὶ Χαλδαίων—τὰρ ὧν τὰτε καὶ θεολογίας καὶ ἀσεβηλογίας ἐμαθεν ἐπὶ παῖς ὧν. & Paulo post, φησὶ ὅτι Δημήτριος ἐν ἐμονυμοῖς καὶ Ἀντιόχῳ ἐν διαδόχῳ, ἐποδημήσαι αὐτὸν καὶ εἰς Ἀιγύπτου, πρὸς τὰς ἱερεῖς, γεομετεῖαν μαθησόμενον, καὶ πρὸς Χαλδαίους εἰς τὴν Περσίδα, καὶ εἰς τὴν ἑρυθρὰν θάλασσαν γενέσθαι. Laert. in Vit. Democr.

^z So Justin. Martyr. ad Graccos. Cohort. p. 25, 26.

motion ; of Tityus, having vultures always feeding on his liver ; and of Tantalus, in extreme thirst, standing in water up to his middle, with apples hanging over his head, and near his mouth, and yet he unable to extinguish his thirst with either. But, as a learned ^a author observes, “ the reason why the Heathens described the punishments of the damned after this manner, was not because they thought that their bodies were not left here on earth, but partly because it was the vulgar opinion, that the soul had all the same parts that the body has, and partly because such descriptions do more easily move and affect us ; and it is not easy to describe the torments of the soul after any other manner. Our Lord, in the parable of Dives and Lazarus, adds the same author, speaks of them in the same manner, as if they had bodies ; though what is related of them, is supposed to be before the resurrection, and their bodies are supposed to be yet in their graves.”

As for some particular instances of persons, who have been said to be raised from the dead to life, mentioned by Heathen writers ; as Alcestis ^b by Hercules, Hippo-

^a Hody's Resurrection of the (same) Body asserted, &c.

p. 5.

^b Vid. Palaephatus. de incredibilibus Hist. p. 56. Hygin. Fab. 51.

lytus ^c by Æsculapius, with many others of the like kind : Acilius Aviola, Lucius Lamia, Ælius Tubero, and others, are said ^d to revive on the funeral pile : Er Armenius Pamphilius is ^e reported to come to life, after he had been dead twelve days : Hercules is ^f said to live after, he had burnt himself ; and Æsculapius to be raised, after he had been struck with thunder, and who himself is said ^g to restore one to life that was carrying to the pile ; and much such a story is told of Apollonius Tyaneus ^h : As for these instances, I say, they seem to be ⁱ fabulous stories, and undeserving of credit. It is true, indeed, they have been credited by some of the Heathens ; and since they have, an argument from hence may be improved

^c Pausanias in Corinth. p. 135. Hygin. Fab. 49.

^d Vid. Valer. Maxim. L. 1. de miraculis, c. 8. §. 12. & Plin. Natural Hist. L. 7. c. 52.

^e Valer. Maxim. ibid. Extern. 1. Macrobi. in somn. Scipionis. L. 1. c. 1. Clemens Alexandrinus calls him Zoaroastres. Stromat. L. 5. p. 598, 599. Edit. Paris. Vid. Origin. contr. Cels. L. 2. p. 70. & Aug. de civitat. Dei. L. 22. c. 28. & L. Viv. in ib.

^f *Εἶτα πισθεὶς ὑπὸ Ἡρακλέα καύσαντα ἑαυτὸν, ζῆν, καὶ Ἀσκληπιὸν κεραινωθέντα ἐγνηγέσθαι, τὰ δ' ὑπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ σοὶ λεγόμενα ἀπισθεῖς.* Theophilus ad Autolyicum, L. 1. p. 77. Edit. Paris.

^g Vid. Apulei Florida, §. 19. Plin. L. 7. c. 37. & L. 26. c. 3.

^h Philostrat. vit. Apollon. L. 4. c. 16.

ⁱ Vid. Palaephata. de incred. p. 56, 57, 58. & Plin. Nat. Hist. L. 7. c. 52. & Cuperi Apoth. Homeri, p. 125.

against them with great force, and for the doctrine of the resurrection ; for if they can believe these things, “ Why should it be thought a thing incredible with them, that God should raise the dead.” It may be, I have been too long on this subject ; I therefore proceed to observe,

That the Jews were peculiarly blessed by God with that revelation which discovers the truth of this doctrine. In this they had the advantage of the Gentiles, “ because that unto them were committed the oracles of God ^k ;” and yet there were some among them, as the sect of the Sadducees, which did not believe this truth ; they said, “ there was no resurrection ^l ; tho’ in this, as our Lord says, they erred, “ not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God ^m.” In this the Hemerobaptists agreed ⁿ with them ; nor did the ^o Essenes acknowledge the doctrine of the resurrection ; yea, many of the Pharisees held the Pythagorean notion of the transmigration of souls into other bodies, which is

^k Rom. iii. 1, 2.

^l Matt. xxii. 23. Acts xxiii. 8.

^m Matt. xxii. 29.

ⁿ Vid. Epiphan. contr. Haeref. L. 1. Haeref. 17. Justin. Martyr. Dialog. cum Tryph. p. 307. Ed. Paris.

^o Vid. Josephum de Bello Jud. L. 2. c. 7. These, perhaps, are the *Mæisai*, mentioned by Justin Martyr, among other Jewish Sects, as of the same mind with the Sadducees, Dialog. cum Tryph. p. 307.

asserted by Josephus ^p, and, by learned men, collected from several passages ^q of scripture; which notion has been ^r embraced by many of that people: Nor is it so astonishing, as that, whereas, in the writings of the New Testament, there is a more clear discovery made of this truth, yet it has been denied and opposed by some, who have had the advantages of them. It was the error of Hymenaeus and Philetus, “ that the resurrection was past already ^s:” And some in the church at Corinth ^t held “ that there is no resurrection of the dead.” These were followed by ^v Simon Magus, Saturninus, Basilides, Carpocrates, Valentinus, and others, too numerous to recite; and of late the doctrine of the resurrection of the same body is rejected by Socinians and Quakers. But to go on,

^p Antiqu. L. 18. c. 2. & de Bello Jud. L. 2. c. 7. Vid. Reland. Antiq. Sac. Vet. Hebraeor. Par. 2. c. 11. §. 6.

^q As Matt. xvi. 14. John i. 21. & ix. 1. Vide Poli Synopsin in Locos.

^r Vid. Shalshele. Hakkabala, fol. 38. 1. & Menasseh ben Israel de Resurrectione, L. 1. c. 16. & L. 2. c. 18. Leo Modena, L. 5. c. 11. Holsten. Observ. ad vitam Pythagor. p. 81. & Maji Synops. Jud. Theolog. loc. 24. §. 5, 6.

^s 2 Tim. ii. 18.

^t 1 Cor. xv. 12.

^v Vid. Epiphani. contr. Haeres. Augustin. de Haeres. & alios Haeresium Scriptores.

II. I shall now endeavour to evince both the credibility and certainty of the resurrection of the dead, notwithstanding it has been accounted by many absurd and incredible.

First, I shall shew the credibility of it ; and that,

1st. From its consistence with the nature and perfections of God. If God is omnipotent and omniscient, as he certainly is, or he would not be God, the resurrection of the dead is not incredible ; it is what may be. God is omnipotent, he can do all things ; what is impossible with men, is possible with him : He cannot do any thing, indeed, which argues imperfection and weakness, or implies a contradiction and falshood : He cannot lye, or deny himself. But the resurrection of the dead is not an instance of either. It is no contradiction, that the dust, which was formed out of nothing, being reduced to dust, should again form the body, which it once constituted ; nor does this argue imperfection or weakness, but is a glorious instance of mighty power. A Heathen ^w

^w Imperfectae vero in homine naturae praecipua solatia, ne Deum quidem posse omnia. Namque nec sibi potest mortem consciscere, si velit, quod homini dedit optimum in tantis vitae poenis : nec mortales aeternitate donare, aut revocare defunctos ; nec facere ut qui vixit, non vixerit. Plin. Nat. Hist. L. 2. c. 7.

once said, that it was not in the power of God to raise the dead; and to another *, it seemed impossible for any to restore life to one that is dead: But if God could make all things out of nothing, as he did, and, from a dark confused chaos, raise up such a beautiful structure as this world, and, out of the dust of the earth, form the body of man, and infuse into it, and unite it with a living and reasonable soul; then much more must he be able to raise up a dead body, the matter and substance of which now is, tho' in different forms and shapes, and re-unite it to its soul, which still has a real existence: It is much easier to restore that which is, to its former condition †, than to make to exist that which is not. God is also omniscient; he knows all things; he knows all the particles of matter, of which our bodies are composed; and, when they are dissolved into several parts, blown about by the several winds,

* Ἐμοὶ δὲ δοκεῖ μὴδὲν ἀποθανόντα δύνασθαι τινα ἀνα-
στῆναι. Palaeophatus de incredib. Hist. p. 56. Ed. Gale. Can-
tabr. 1671.

† Ceterum quis tam stultus aut brutus est, ut audeat repug-
nare, hominem à Deo, ut primum potuisse fingi, ita posse de-
nuo reformari?—Porro difficilius est id quod non fit, in-
cipere, quam id quod fuerit iterare. Minuc. Felix. in Octav.
p. 37, 38.

Et utique idoneus est reficere, qui fecit; quanto plus est
fetisse, quam reticisse: initium dedisse, quam reddidisse. Ita
restitutionem carnis faciliorem credas institutione. Tertull.
de Resurrectione carnis, c. 11.

crumbled into dust, reduced to ashes, evaporated into air, or digested into the bodies of other creatures, and have been transmuted into ten thousand forms and shapes; he knows where they are lodged, and what are the several receptacles and repositories of them, whether in the earth, air, or sea; and his all-discerning eye can distinguish those particles of matter which belong to one body, from those which belong to another; and his almighty hand can gather and unite them together in their own proper bodies, and range them in their due place and order. If God then is omnipotent and omniscient, the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead ought not to be accounted incredible.

Again, if God can raise the dead, and will not, it must be, as an ancient learned Apologist ^z observes, either because it is
beneath

^z Ἄλλὰ μὴ ἐδ' ἀβέλητον. Τὸ γὰρ ἀβέλητον, ἢ ὡς ἀδίκον, αὐτῷ ἐστὶν ἀβέλητον, ἢ ὡς ἀνάξιον· καὶ πάλιν, τὸ ἀδίκον ἢ πρὸς αὐτὸν θεωρεῖται ἢ ἀνασπρόβλητον, ἢ πρὸς ἄλλον τινὰ παρ' αὐτόν· ἀλλ' ὅτι μὴ ἐδὲς ἀδικεῖται τῷ ἔξωθεν καὶ ἤν' ἐν τοῖς ἔσιν αἰεθμενῶν, πρόσβλητον· ἔτε γὰρ αἱ νοηταὶ φύσεις ἐκ τῆς ἀνθρώπων ἀναστάσεως ἀδικηθεῖεν ἂν (ἐδὲ γὰρ ἐμποδίων τὶ ταύταις πρὸς τὸ εἶναι, ἐβλάβη, ἐκ ὕβρις ἢ τῆς ἀνθρώπων ἀνάστασις) ἐ μὴ ἐδὲ τῆς ἀλόγων ἢ φύσις, ἐδὲ τῆς ἀψύχων· ἐδὲ γὰρ ἔσαι μετὰ τὴν ἀνάστασιν· πρὸς τὸ μὴ ἔν, ἐδὲν ἀδίκον· εἰ δὲ καὶ εἶναι τις ὑποδοῖτο διαπαντός, ἐκ ἂν ἀδικηθεῖν ταῦτα, τῆς ἀνθρώπων σωμάτων ἀνανεώθεντων. εἰ γὰρ ὑπέκονταν οὐκ ἐν τῇ φύσει τῆς ἀνθρώπων, καὶ τὰς τέτων χρεῖαις ὄντων ἐνδεῶν ὑπὸ τε ζυγὸν ἡγούμενα καὶ δουλείαν παντοῖαν, ἐδὲν ἀδικεῖται· περὶ μάλλον, ἀρθάρτων καὶ ἀνευδεῶν γενομένων, καὶ μηκέτι δεομένων τῶν τέτων χρεῖαις, ἐλδ.

beneath him, or because it would be a piece of injustice in him. It is not beneath him ; for if it was not beneath him to make a body out of the dust of the earth, which was subject to infirmities, corruption, and death, it cannot be beneath him to raise weak, inglorious, and corruptible bodies, in power, in glory, and in incorruption ; or to change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto the glorious body of his Son. Nor can it be unjust in God to raise the dead. God is good, and he doeth good ; he cannot do any thing injurious to his creatures : He is “ good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works.” If any injury is done hereby, it must be either to those who are raised, or

ἐλαττωθέντα ἢ πάσης δουλείας, ἐκ ἀδικηθήσεται· ἐδὲ
 γὰρ εἰ φωνῆς μετέσχευ, ἡττίαςάντο αὐτὸν ἢ δημιουργὸν ὡς πρὸς τὸ
 δίκαιον ἐλαττῆν ἡμῶν ἀνδρῶν, ὅτι μὴ τῇ αὐτῆς τέτοις τε-
 τυχηρῶν ἀναστάσεως· ὡν γὰρ ἡ φύσις ἐδὲ ἴση, τέτοις ἐδὲ τὸ τέ-
 λος ἴσον ὁ δίκαιος ἐπιμετρεῖ· χωρεῖ ἢ τέτων παρ’ οἷς ἐδὲ τῆ
 δικαίας μία κρίσις, ἐδὲ μέμψις ἀδικίας· ἐ μὲν ἐδὲ ἐκείνο φῆσαι
 δυνατὸν, ὡς πρὸς αὐτὸν θεωρεῖται τις ἀδικία ἢ ἀνισάμηνον ἀν-
 δρωπον· ὅτι μὲν γὰρ ἔστι ἐκ ψυχῆς καὶ σώματος, ἔτε ἢ εἰς ψυ-
 χὴν, ἔτε εἰς σῶμα δεχεται τὴν ἀδικίαν· ἔτε γὰρ τὴν ψυχὴν
 ἀδικῶς φῆσαι τις σοφρονῶν, ὅτι λήσεται γὰρ ταύτη σύνεκ-
 βάλλων καὶ τὴν παρεῖχ’ ζώην· εἰ γὰρ νῦν ἐν φθαρτῷ καὶ παθητῷ
 κατοικῶσα σῶματι, μηδὲν ἡδίκηται, πολὺ μᾶλλον—ἀφθάρ-
 τῷ καὶ ἀπαθεί συζῶσα, ἐκ ἀδικηθήσεται· ἀλλ’, ἐδὲ τὸ σῶ-
 μα ἀδικεῖται τί· εἰ γὰρ νῦν φθαρτὸν ἀφθάρτω συνόν, ἐδ’
 ἀφθάρτω ἀδικηθήσεται· ἐ μὲν ἐδ’ ἐκείνο φαίνεται αὐτῷ, ὡς
 ἀνάξιον ἔργον πῶς Θεῷ, τὸ διάλυθὲν ἀναστήσαι σῶμα καὶ
 συναγαγεῖν· εἰ γὰρ τὸ χεῖρον ἐκ ἀνάξιον, τῆτ’ ὅτι γὰρ φθα-
 ρτὸν ποιῆσαι σῶμα καὶ παθητὸν πολὺ μᾶλλον, τὸ κρεῖττον
 ἐκ ἀνάξιον, ὅπερ’ ὅτι ἀφθαρτον καὶ ἀπαθές. Athenagoras
 de Resurrectione Mort. p. 49. 50. Edit. Paris.

Of the Resurrection.

to some others; if to any others, they must be either rational and intelligent, or irrational and inanimate creatures; not rational and intelligent ones, as the angels, who will receive no hurt to their nature hereby, or suffer any damage or reproach on the account of it; yea, by the resurrection, the saints will be made yet more agreeable to them; for they will be ἰσὺς ἑ-
 λα, “like or equal unto the angels, being the children of the resurrection.” Nor will it be injurious to irrational and inanimate creatures; for these either will be, or they will not be; if they are not, there can be no injury done to that which is not; if they should then exist, no injustice will be done to them; for if now no injustice is done them, tho’ they are subjected to men, employ’d in their service, and made use of to support their nature, then surely it can be no damage to them, that men should be rais’d immortal and incorruptible, and so stand in no need of them, and they be deliver’d from that bondage and servitude, in which now they are; and, had they tongues to speak, they would not accuse the Author of the resurrection of injustice, because they are placed below men, and are not partakers of the resurrection with them; the righteous God not allotting the same end to both, their natures being not alike. Moreover, as there is not in them
 any

any sense of justice, there can be no complaint of injustice. Nor will there be any injury done to them that are raised, either to their souls or bodies; their bodies will be immortal and incorruptible, and their souls will be more capable than now of exercising their several powers and faculties: If any injury is done, it must be either to the righteous or the wicked; not to the righteous, for “they that have done good, shall come forth to the resurrection of life^a,” and, having their souls and bodies re-united, shall enjoy an endless eternity of bliss and happiness; nor will any injustice be done to the wicked, tho’ they shall come forth to the resurrection of damnation, because they will then receive the just recompence of reward for the deeds done by them in the body: Which leads me to observe,

That as considering the omnipotence and omniscience of God, the resurrection of the dead may be, which also is no ways contrary to his goodness; so the justice of God makes it necessary that it should be. God is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works; he is the Judge of all the earth, who will do right; and it is but just with him that those bodies, which Christ has purchased with his blood, and the

^a John v. 29.

Spirit has sanctified by his grace, and which have suffered for his names sake, should be raised again, that they, together with their souls, may enjoy that glory which is purchased for them, and which they are made meet to be partakers of; even as it is a righteous thing with God, to render tribulation to them that trouble them; and so consequently it is no act of injustice in God to raise the bodies, both of the righteous and the wicked, that they may receive the things done in the body, whether they be good, or whether they be evil. These things being consider'd, it may be concluded, that the resurrection of the dead is not inconsistent with the perfections of God, and so not incredible. To these considerations I add,

2dly. The several instances of persons who have been raised from the dead, recorded in scripture; such as the child of the widow of Zarephath, which came to life upon Elijah's prayer; and the child of the Shunamite, upon Elisha's; as also the man that was cast into Elisha's sepulchre, who revived and stood upon his feet, upon touching the prophet's bones; mentioned in the Old Testament: Likewise Jairus's daughter, the widow's son of Nain and Lazarus, who were raised by Christ; and not to forget to mention the saints, who came out of their graves, after our Lord's resur,

resurrection : And also Dorcas, who was raised by Peter ; as was Eutychus by the apostle Paul ; which instances are recorded in the New Testament. My argument upon these instances is this ; that what has been, may be ; and, if these instances of particular resurrections are to be credited, then the doctrine of the resurrection of all the dead is not to be accounted incredible. And,

3dly. It may not be improper if I should just mention some typical and figurative resurrections. The scriptures give us an account of Jonah's lying three days and three nights in the whale's belly ; and his deliverance from thence, was a type of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. The saving of Isaac from being sacrificed, was like a resurrection from the dead ; and, indeed, " from thence Abraham received him in a figure ^b." The redemption of the people of Israel out of the Babylonish captivity, was a metaphorical resurrection, and is signified by the reviving of dry bones ; which was done by laying sinews, and bringing flesh upon them, covering them with skin, and putting breath into them. The budding and blossoming of Aaron's dry rod, is thought, by some, to be a figure of the resurrection of

^b Heb. xi. 19.

the dead. However, be that as it will, this may be observed, that if God could deliver Jonah out of the whale's belly, save Isaac from being sacrificed, when so near it, make dry bones to live and stand upon their feet, and cause a dry rod to bud, blossom, and bring forth almonds; then why should it be thought a thing incredible with any, that God should raise the dead? But,

Secondly, I now proceed to shew, that the resurrection of the dead is not only credible, but certain; and this I shall do, partly from scripture testimonies, and partly from other scripture doctrines.

1st. From scripture testimonies, which shall be taken both out of the Old and New Testament. I shall begin with producing testimonies out of the former: And,

1. With the words of God to Moses; "I am the God of thy Father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." I choose to mention this scripture, and to begin with it, because with this our Lord confronted the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection of the dead, and put them to silence; insomuch, that, after that, no man durst ask any question at all; the account of which you have in Matt. xxii. 23. and some following verses;

Exod. iii. 6,

and

and it stands thus. The Sadducees came to him with an instance of a woman, who had had seven husbands, who were brethren ; and their question upon it is, whose wife she should be in the resurrection ? To which Christ replies, having observed to them their ignorance of the scriptures, and the power of God, that “ in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage ; but are as the angels of God in heaven ; and then adds, “ But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob ; God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.” But now here lies a difficulty, how this appears to be a proof of the resurrection of the dead. Some have thought, that our Lord’s design is to prove the immortality of the soul, which the Sadducees denied, as well as the resurrection of the dead ; for they that deny the former, deny the latter ; and some of the same arguments which prove the one, prove the other. Menasseh ben Israel, a learned Jew ^d of the last century, produces this same passage of scripture, to prove the immortality of the soul, and argues from it much in the same manner as Christ does.

^d De Resurrectione Mortuorum, L. 1. c. 10. §. 6.

But it is certain, that our Lord produced this testimony as a proof of the resurrection. In one of the evangelists, it is said, "As touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken ^e?" &c. And in another, "Now that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the bush, when he called the Lord ^f," &c. Let it be observed then, that it is not said, I was, or I will be, but I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; which is expressive not only of a covenant which had been made, but of one that abides and continues, which must be either the covenant of grace made with them in Christ, of which they had some glorious discoveries and manifestations, or some particular covenant respecting them and their posterity. As for the covenant of grace, this respected not their souls only, but their bodies also, even their whole persons; therefore, as their souls now live with God in the enjoyment of the promised good, it is necessary that their bodies should be raised from the dead, that, with their souls, they may enjoy the everlasting blessing of glory and happiness; otherwise, how would God's covenant be an everlasting one, order'd in all things, and sure? The learned

^e Matt. xxii. 31.

^f Luke xx. 37.

Mr. Mede ^g thinks, that Christ has respect to the covenant which God made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in which he promised that he would give the land of Canaan to them, and to their posterity ; not to their posterity only, but to them also ; therefore he observes, that it was necessary that they should be raised from the dead, that they, in their own persons, might enjoy the promised land. It must be acknowledged, that this is a way of arguing the Jews were used to, which may be the reason of the Scribes being so well pleased with it ; and therefore said, “ Master, thou hast well said ^h.” Such kind of arguments as these, to prove the resurrection of the dead, are now extant in their Talmud ⁱ. For instance : “ R. Simai said, From whence is the resurrection of the dead to be proved out of the law ? from Exod. vi. 4. where it is said, And I have also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan ; it is not said to you, but to them.” But, not to insist any longer on this proof, I proceed,

^g See his Works, L. 4. Ep. 43. p. 981, 982.

^h Luke xx. 39.

ⁱ ר' סימאי אומר מניין לתחיית המתים מן התורה שנאמר וגם הקימותי את בריתי אתם לתת להם את ארץ כנען לכם לא נאמר אלא להם מנא לתחיית המתים מן התורה. Talmud. Bab. Sanhedrim. fol. 90. col. 2.

2. To another passage of scripture, for the confirmation of this doctrine, which is in Job xix. 25, 26, 27. “ For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth ; and though, after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for my self ; and mine eyes shall behold, and not another, though my reins be consumed within me.” I shall not trouble you with the different versions of these words, some favouring, and some not, the doctrine of the resurrection: And it must be owned, that none of the Jewish ^k writers understand the words of a real, but of a figurative or metaphorical resurrection, and suppose Job’s meaning to be, that he should be deliver’d from the afflicted state, in which he then was, and be restored to his former health, honour, and happiness; in which sense of the words they have been followed by some learned Christian ^l interpreters, at which the Socinians ^m very greedily catch. Temporal afflictions are, indeed, sometimes signified by death, and a deliverance out of them must be as life

^k Non allegavi huc illud Jobi c. xix. 25. Nihil enim in eo est, quod ad resurrectionem pertinet ; neque ullus Hebraeorum reperitur, qui verba haec in istam sententiam exposuit. Menasseh ben Israel. de Resurrectione, L. 1. c. 3. §. 6.

^l Calvin, Mercer, &c.

^m Enjedin. Explic. loc. Script. p. 51, &c. Volkel. de vera Relig. L. 3. c. 11. p. 59, 60.

from the dead ; but that this cannot be Job's sense and meaning here, may be concluded from the following hints. Job was so far from having any faith in, or assurance of his restoration to his former state of health, honour, and riches, that he had no hope, no expectation of it ; nay, seems entirely to despair of it, though his friends endeavour'd to support him with views of it, on condition of his repentance. He declares ⁿ, that he had no reason to hope for life, that he should quickly be gone, and therefore had made death familiar to him ; that he did not expect to see any more temporal good ; yea, in this very chapter, at the tenth verse, he says of God, " He hath destroy'd me on every side, and I am gone ; and mine hope hath he removed like a tree," and continues his doleful moan to the very words under consideration ; so that it must seem unlikely, that, on a sudden, he should have his expectations of outward prosperity raised. No, the words are rather expressive of what was his inward support and comfort under present afflictions, and in the views of approaching death and the grave. They are an answer to what Bildad had said, in the preceding chapter, ver. 12, 13, 14. con-

ⁿ See Chap. vi. 11. and vii. 7, 8. and x. 20. and xvi. 22. and xvii. 1, 14, 15, 16.

cerning the wicked man ; where, though he may not directly mean Job, yet he had his eye upon him, when he says, “ His strength shall be hunger-bitten, and destruction shall be ready at his side. It shall devour the strength of his skin, even the first-born of death shall devour his strength. His confidence shall be rooted out of his tabernacle, and it shall bring him to the king of terrors.” Well now, as if Job should say, Supposing all this, yet this is my comfort, I know my interest in the living Redeemer, and am comfortably persuaded, that when he appears at the latter day, though this body of mine is now reduced to skin and bones, and will shortly be therewith of worms, yet it shall be raised again, and, in this very flesh of mine, shall I see God, and everlastingly enjoy him. The preface to the words shews, that it was something future, and at a great distance, which he had in view, even after the consumption of his own body, and at the appearance of his Redeemer in the latter day ; and which was very considerable, and of moment ; and therefore he says, “ Oh, that my words were now written ! Oh, that they were printed in a book ! that they were graven with an iron pen and lead, in the rock for ever !” Besides, the vision of God with the eyes of his body, which he expected, is not suited
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to any state and condition in this life, but rather to the state of eternal glory and happiness, when saints shall see him in the Mediator, as he is; nor can Job's words have reference to the vision he had of God, of which he speaks, chap. xlii. 6. "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee." Since that issued not barely in his peace, joy, and comfort, but likewise, in conviction of his folly and weakness, in self-abhorrence, and deep humiliation. Add to all this, that Job, in the close of this chapter, puts his friends in mind of the awful judgment: "Be ye afraid of the sword; for wrath bringeth the punishments of the sword, that ye may know there is a judgment;" between which and death, there must be a resurrection from the dead, of which he had before spoken, that so every one may come forth to judgment, and receive the things done in their body, whether they be good or evil. From the whole, we may conclude, that Job here declares his faith, concerning the resurrection of the dead at the last day, and not his own restoration, from outward misery to outward happiness. An ancient writer ° once thought, that no-

° Quid hac prophetia manifestius? Nullus tam aperte post Christum, quam iste ante Christum de resurrectione loquitur. Hieron. ad Pammach. adv. Error. Joan. Hierosol. inter ejus opera, Tom. II. p. 59. col. 1. Edit. Paris.

thing could be a plainer proof of this doctrine: for, says he, “no one since Christ speaks so plainly of the resurrection, as this man did before Christ.”

3. Another testimony I shall produce for the proof of this doctrine, shall be Isai. xxvi. 19. “Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body, shall they arise; awake, and sing ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast forth her dead.” In ver. 14. the prophet says, “They are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased, they shall not rise;” the meaning of which words is, either that those tyrants, who formerly had dominion over the people of Israel, were dead, and should not live any more in this world, or rise again, to tyrannise over them; or that many of the people were dead, or should die by the sword, famine, &c. and not live again; which the prophet mentions, by way of complaint, and as the effect of unbelief, to which these words are an answer. The person speaking is the Messiah, to whom the characters given, in ver. 4, 12, 13. belong; who assures the prophet, that tho’ his men or people were dead, yet they should live again, that they should be raised again, either at the time of his resurrection, or by virtue of it. The words are literally true of Christ’s resurrection, and of
ours

ours by him ^p, who, as he was to be born, and die, and rise again, in order to be the Saviour of his people, so many of them were to rise along with him; therefore he says, "With my dead body shall they arise;" which was fulfilled at the time of Christ's resurrection ^q, when "the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints, which slept, arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection." Though these words may be render'd either thus, "As my dead body shall they arise," i. e. in the same way and manner, Christ's resurrection is the exemplar of ours, our vile bodies shall be fashioned like unto his; he is "risen from the dead ^r, and become the first fruits of them that slept;" or, "as sure as my dead body shall they arise." Christ's resurrection is the pledge of ours; because he lives, we shall live also ^s: "If we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even so them also, which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him." The expressions here made use of confirm this sense of the words, "Awake, and sing ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs." To dwell in the dust, is expressive of the state of the dead; and a

^p See my book of the prophecies of the Old Testament, &c. literally fulfilled in Jesus, p. 183.

^q Matt. xxvii. 52, 53. ^r 1 Cor. xv. 20. ^s John xiv. 19. 1 Thess. iv. 14.

resurrection from thence is aptly signified by an awaking, since death is so frequently, in the sacred writings, compared to sleep^t. The power of God in raising the dead, is fitly express'd by the dew ; for as through the virtue and influence of the dew, the grafs and herbs of the field spring up and grow ; so, through the wonderful power of God, “ our bones, to use the prophet's phrase^v, shall flourish like an herb,” in the resurrection morn ; and it is easy to observe a likeness between the last clause of this verse, “ And the earth shall cast forth her dead ;” and those expressions by which the resurrection is described, in Rev. xx. 13. “ And the sea gave up the dead which were in it ; and death and hell, or the grave, deliver'd up the dead, which were in them.” The Jews^w refer this prophecy to the resurrection of the dead. But,

4. To add no more testimonies of this kind, I shall conclude the evidence of this doctrine out of the Old Testament, from the famous prophecy in Dan. xii. 2. “ And many of them that sleep in the dust of the

^t See Job vii. 21. and xvii. 16. and xx. 11, and xx. 16. Dan. xii. 2.

^v Isai. lxvi. 14.

^w Talmud Sanhedrim, fol. 90. 2. Menasseh ben Israel de Resurrectione, L. 1. c. 2. §. 2. Kimchi & Aben Ezra in loc. Zohar in Gen. fol. 68. 4. & 79. 3. & 100. 3. & in Exod. fol. 12. 3. & 62. 4. & 88. 3. Ed. Sultzba c.

earth shall awake ; some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." These words are generally understood of the resurrection of the dead, as well by Jewish ^x as Christian interpreters. Porphyry ^y, the acute Heathen, and sworn enemy of Christianity, would have these words design the return of some of the people of the Jews, to their own cities and habitations, after Antiochus's generals were cut off, who before skulked about in holes and corners, and in which sense of the text he is followed by Grotius. But surely this deliverance, or the return of this people, was not in any of them to shame and contempt, especially to everlasting shame and contempt ; nor was it to everlasting life in any of them, seeing they are all since dead. Nor is it true, that the doctors of the Jewish church, from that time, shone as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars of heaven : But, on the contrary, their knowledge decreased, their light grew dim, and they became vain in their imaginations. On the other hand, the whole agrees with the resurrection of the dead, when, as our Lord says ^z, whose

^x Talmud. Sanhed. fol. 92. 1. Menasseh ben Israel de Resurrectione, L. 1. c. 3. §. 5. Saadia Gaon, Aben Ezra, Jarchi, & Jacchiades in loc. Zohar. in Gen. fol. 67. 4. & 79. 3. & 83. 1. & 100. 3. & in Exod. fol. 24. 3. & 43. 4.

^y Vid. Grotium in loc.

^z John v. 28, 29.

words are the best comment on this text, "All that are in their graves shall hear his voice, i. e. the voice of Christ, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation," and when the bodies of the saints shall be raised in incorruption, power, and glory, and shall shine forth like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. I might have produced several other scriptures out of the Old Testament for the confirmation of this truth; such as Hosea vi. 2. and xiii. 14, &c. but I forbear, and pass on

To the New Testament. And here, was I to take the whole compass of proof, which this will furnish out, I must transcribe a considerable part of it. I shall only observe, that this is the doctrine of Christ, and his apostles; it is a doctrine which Christ himself taught: He declared himself to be the resurrection and the life, or to be the author of the resurrection unto life; and that not only those whom the Father had given to him, should be raised by him, but that all that are in their graves, whether good or bad, should come forth from thence at his powerful and all-commanding voice. The same doctrine was taught by his apostles, who all jointly agree, that there will be a resurrection
I
both

both of the just and unjust. The arguments of the apostle Paul for the confirmation of this doctrine, are by him laid together, in the fifteenth chapter of his first epistle to the Corinthians. I do not now take notice of particular passages in the New Testament, partly because they are plain and obvious proofs of this truth at first view, and partly because I shall have occasion to make particular use of them in some other parts of these discourses. I proceed,

2dly. To prove the certainty of the resurrection of the dead from other scripture truths and doctrines, which I shall little more than name; and shall begin,

1. With the doctrine of election. That there is an eternal ^a, personal election of some to everlasting life and salvation, the scriptures do abundantly declare. Now this act of election regards not their souls only, but their bodies also, even their whole persons: If then their persons, body and soul, are chosen in Christ to everlasting salvation, then their bodies must be raised from the dead, that they, united to their souls, may together inherit the kingdom, prepared for them from the foundation of the world; otherwise the purpose of God, according to election, will not

^a See Mr. Sladen on Election, Vol. I.

stand; when, on the contrary, it is certain, that his counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure.

2. It is the doctrine of the scriptures, that the same persons who were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, were given to him by the Father, were put into his hands, and made his care and charge. They were given to him not only to be his portion and inheritance, but to be kept, preserved, and saved by him, body and soul. This was the declared will of his Father, when he gave them to him, as he himself assures us^b; “And this is the Father’s will, which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, (no, not even their dust) but should raise it up again at the last day; and this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.” Now if these bodies of the saints, which are given to Christ, should not be raised from the dead, the Father’s will would not be fulfilled, nor Christ discharge the trust reposed in him.

3. This truth may be concluded from the redemption of our bodies, as well as of our souls, by the blood of Christ. ’Tis

^b John vi. 39, 40.

true, this is sometimes called the redemption of the soul, and the salvation of the soul, but not to the exclusion of the body; for that is bought with the same price the soul is. Hence the apostle says to the saints ^c after this manner: “Ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.” Now if these bodies, which Christ has bought, should not be raised from the dead, he would lose part of his purchase; nor could he perfectly see the travail of his soul and be satisfied.

4. This doctrine may be infer’d from the union of the saints to Christ, body and soul. Their whole persons are united to him; “Know ye not, says the apostle ^d, that your bodies are the members of Christ;” they are part of his mystical body, they are united to him, as well as their souls, and remain in union with him after death; for as the union of the two natures in Christ was not dissolved, when his soul and body were at death disunited, so neither is the union between Christ and his people dissolved at death; and, by virtue of this union, their bodies shall be raised from the dead; otherwise Christ must lose a constituent part of those who are his mystical body, and so the church not

^c 1 Cor. vi. 20.^d Ver. 15.

be “ the fulness of him that filleth all in all,” as she is said to be, Eph. i. 23.

5. All those who are chosen in Christ, who are given to him, who are redeemed by him, and are in union with him, are sanctified by the Spirit of God, and that not in their souls only, but in their bodies also ; for as the body, as well as the soul, is defiled by sin, it also stands in need of the sanctifying influences of divine grace. Accordingly the Spirit takes up his dwelling in the bodies, as well as in the souls of men ; “ What, know ye not, says the apostle ^e, that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you.” He begins and carries on the work of sanctification in the one, as well as in the other, as is needful, and will, at last, compleatly finish it ; for which the apostle prays ^f, saying, “ And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly ; and I pray God your whole spirit, soul and body, be preserv’d blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Now if the bodies of these sanctified ones are not raised, the Spirit of God will not only lose that which he has taken possession of, as his dwelling place, but also a considerable part of his glory, as a Sanctifier.

^e 1 Cor. vi. 19.

^f 1 Thess. v. 23.

6. It will not be improper to take notice of the translations of Enoch and Elias to heaven, who were taken up thither, soul and body; nor of the saints, who came out of their graves after our Lord's resurrection, and went with him to glory^s, as is very probable; nor of those who shall be alive at Christ's second coming, who shall not die, but be changed, and be caught up with the rest of the saints in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: Now whereas it is certain, that there are some saints already in heaven with their bodies, and others that will be, it is very improbable that the rest should be without, or that there should be this difference among the Spirits of just men made perfect, that some should have their bodies united to them, and others not.

7. Nothing is more certain than that there will be a general judgment. God has appointed the day in which, and ordained the Person by whom, he will judge the world in righteousness, when all, both great and small, shall stand before God, and the dead shall be judged according to their works. Now, in order to this, the resurrection of them is absolutely necessary, that they may receive the things done in their body, whether good or bad.

^s Vid. Auctor. Qu. & Resp. ad Orthodox. Qu. 85. p. 443. inter opera Iuliani, Ed. Par.

8. Neither the happiness of the righteous will be complete, nor the misery of the wicked be proportionate to their crimes; until the resurrection. The happiness of the saints will not be complete. Hence they are “waiting^h for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of their body,” when that being redeemed from the grave, and united to the soul, shall, with it, enter into the joy of the Lord. Nor will the misery of the wicked be proportionate to their crimes till then, when they shall be cast, body and soul, into hell; and as the one deserves it, as well as the other, it is proper that so it should be.

9. There will be need of, and uses for bodily organs, or for some of the members of the body in heaven; as particularly the eye, the ear, and tongue. There will be the glorified body of Christ, or the glorious Mediator in human nature, for the saints to look upon with unutterable pleasure; it will be a considerable part of their happiness to “see him as he is.” This is one reason why Christ would have his people with him where he is, namely, that they may behold his glory, even this, as well as other branches of it; and it was Job’s support under his afflictions, that in his flesh he should see God, that is, the

^h Rom. viii. 23.

God-man and Mediator, or God manifest in the flesh. There will be songs of everlasting joy and praise sung in such melodious strains, as will delight the ear, and employ the tongue, throughout the endless ages of eternity.

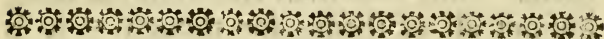
10. And lastly, and which is the apostle Paul's grand and principal argument for the resurrection of the dead, and which he uses with so much strength, and improved to so good a purpose, is the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, which you have at large in 1 Cor. xv. where he thus argues: "If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen; and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain; yea, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God, that he raised up Christ, whom he raised not up, if the dead rise not; for if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised; and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins; then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished." The saints may comfortably conclude their resurrection from Christ's; for if the head be raised, the members shall, "every man in his own order, Christ the first fruits; afterward, they that are Christ's, at his coming." Job was satisfied that he should rise again, because his Redeemer lived,
and

and would appear at the latter day upon the earth, and the saints may be assured, that because Christ lives, they shall live also. Other arguments might have been made use of, but they will also prove that the same body shall be raised again; I shall therefore reserve them for their proper place.





S E R M O N II.



ACTS xxvi. 8.

*Why should it be thought a thing
incredible with you, that God
should raise the dead?*



HAVING, in my former discourse, proved both the credibility and certainty of the resurrection of the dead, I shall now proceed,

III. To enquire who they are, and what that is, which shall be raised. This head of enquiry consists of two parts, and regards both the persons who, and what of those persons it is, which shall be the subject of the resurrection; and in this order I shall consider it.

First,

First, I shall enquire who they are which shall be raised from the dead. I shall not take notice of the Mahometan^a notion, that angels and brutes shall rise, since the former die not, and therefore cannot be said to be raised from the dead; and the spirit of the latter goeth downward to the earth, never to return more. Only men shall rise from the dead, but not all of them; for though “it is appointed unto men once to die,” yet not unto all men: All men shall not die; some will be quick, and others dead, at the appearing of Christ to judge the world, when they that are alive shall, indeed, be changed from a state of mortality, to a state of immortality, but cannot be said to rise from the dead, because they die not. But then all the dead shall be raised, all that are in their graves shall come forth, whether these graves be in the earth or sea, and whether the persons be righteous or wicked. This was the generally received opinion of the Jews of old; but since many of their greatest^b masters have departed from it, who not only exclude the Gentiles

^a Vid. Pocock. not. Miscell. in Port. Mos. c. 7. p. 269. Reland de Relig. Mohammed. L. 1. p. 53, 54.

^b Vid. Pocock. Port. Mos. p. 157. & not. Misc. in ib. c. 6. p. 180, &c. Maji Synops. Theolog. Jud. loc. 25. § 6. p. 337. Jarchi in Is. xxvi. 14. Kimchi in Is. xxvi. 19. & xxxviii. 18. & Saadiah Gaon in Dan. xii. 2.

in general, but all wicked and ungodly persons whatever, from having any part in the resurrection. In this, they have been followed by the Socinians ^c, tho' they care not to speak out their minds fully; and the Remonstrants ^d have shewn a very good liking of the same notion. I shall a little consider this, seeing the greater part of the testimonies and arguments, produced in my former discourse, chiefly relate to the resurrection of the just. That the wicked shall rise, as well as the righteous, may be proved,

1st. From express texts of scripture. The prophet Daniel says ^e, "That some of them who sleep in the dust of the earth, i. e. who are dead, shall awake, i. e. rise again, to shame and everlasting contempt." Who must be the wicked, since it will never be the case of the righteous, who will awake, or rise, to everlasting life. Our Lord Jesus Christ assures us ^f, that "they that have done evil, shall come forth to the resurrection of damnation;" in which words, he does, at once, describe the character of the wicked, asserts their resurrection, and fixes the end of it. The apostle Paul ^g gives a full testimony to this

^c Vid. Maccov. Πρωτον Ἰησοῦ. Socin. c. 15. p. 82. & Anti-socin. L. 5. c. 3. §. 2. Maref. Hydra Socin. Vol. II. p. 315. Synopf. pur Theolog. Disp. 51. §. 34.

^d Vid. Petitii Harm. Remonstrant. & Socin. Artic. 22. Paragr. 4. p. 260.

^e Dan. xii. 2.

^f John v. 29.

^g Acts xxiv. 15.

truth, when he affirms, “ that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.”

2dly. This doctrine may be evinced from the justice of God, which requires, that they who have sinned in the body, should be also punished in the body. The body is the seat of sin, as well as the soul, nor is any part free from it: If the tongue, which is but “ a little member, is a world of iniquity,” as the apostle James ⁱ says it is, what a world of iniquity must be in the whole body? And, indeed, there are but few sins but what are committed in or by the body. It may be consider’d not only as accessory to sin, but as a partner with the soul in sinning, and as an instrument by which it is committed, and, in either respect, is deserving of punishment. Now it is certain, that, in this life, the wicked do not receive in their bodies the full reward of punishment, since they have not greater afflictions than the righteous; nay, it is observed ^k of them, that “ they are not in trouble, as other men, neither are they plagued like other men;” wherefore it seems necessary, from the justice of God, that the bodies of the wicked should be raised, that they, with their souls, may receive the full and just recompence of reward.

ⁱ James iii. 5, 6.

^k Psal. lxxiii. 5.

3dly. That the wicked shall rise from the dead, may be concluded from the general judgment, when “the dead, small and great¹, shall stand before God, and be judged according to their works;” when “whosoever is not found written in the book of life, shall be cast into the lake of fire;” which can be understood of no other than the wicked; and if all men must “appear^m before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done; whether it be good or bad,” then must the wicked appear, that they may receive according to the bad things which they have done in their bodies; in order to which appearance before the judgment-seat, and to the reception of their evil things, there must be a resurrection of them from the dead.

4thly. The account which the scriptures give of the punishment and torments of the wicked, and the effects thereof, manifestly supposes a resurrection of their bodies: How will every eye see Christ when he appears, and all the kindreds of the earth wail, because of him? Why is the place of torment signified by a furnace and lake of fire, and by outer darkness, where will be weeping and gnashing of teeth?

¹ Rev. xx. 12, 13.

^m 2 Cor. v. 10.

Wherefore do the scriptures speak of being cast into hell fire, with two eyes, or two hands, or two feet, if there will be no resurrection of the bodies of the wicked? If it should be said, that these expressions are either metaphorical or proverbial, there must be something literally true, to which they refer, and which is the foundation of them: Besides, our Lord ⁿ expressly exhorts his disciples to “fear him, which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”

5thly. This notion, that the wicked rise not, must have a tendency to licentiousness, and open a door to all manner of sin, and take off all restraints from wicked persons, and embolden them in their vicious course of life; for what the apostle ^o says of the resurrection in general, may be said of this, “If the dead rise not, let us eat and drink, for to morrow we die.” But from these several hints, it may be strongly concluded, that there will be a resurrection of the wicked, as well as of the righteous.

Indeed, there will be a difference between the resurrection of the just, and the resurrection of the unjust, in many respects: There will be a difference in the time of the one and the other; the dead in Christ shall rise first; the upright shall have the

ⁿ Matt. x. 28.

^o 1 Cor. xv. 32.

dominion over the wicked in the morning of the resurrection ; wherefore “ blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection ; on such the second death hath no power ;” and as they shall not rise at the same time, so neither altogether by the same means : They shall, indeed, be both raised by Christ^p ; for “ all that are in the graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth.” The saints will be raised by virtue of their union to Christ, “ because he lives, they shall live also ;” but the wicked will be raised merely by the power of Christ, in order to appear before him, and be judged by him, who is Lord of all. Moreover, though the bodies of the wicked will be raised immortal, and in such a state, as to continue under perpetual punishment, yet they will not be free from sin, nor cloathed with glory ; whereas the bodies of the saints will not only be raised immortal and incorruptible, but powerful, spiritual, and glorious ; yea, will be fashioned like to Christ’s glorious body. In fine, the resurrection of the righteous and the wicked will differ in their end ; the righteous will rise to everlasting life, the wicked to everlasting shame and contempt. Hence the resurrection of the one, is called the resurrection of life ; and the resurrection

^p John v. 28, 29.

of the other, the resurrection of damnation. But now let us attend to the arguments and objections advanced against the resurrection of the wicked, which are taken partly from scripture, and partly from reason.

1. From some passages of scripture; and the first that is objected is, Psal. i. 5. "Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous." From hence some Jewish ^a writers have concluded, that there will be no resurrection of the wicked, their souls perishing with their bodies at death. This notion may seem to be favoured by the versions of the Septuagint ^r and Vulgate, with some others, who read the words thus: "Therefore the ungodly shall not rise again in judgment." But supposing, and not granting, that these versions may be agreeable to the Hebrew text, it will not follow, from hence, that the wicked shall not rise again; for it is not said absolutely, that they shall not rise again, but that they shall not rise again in judgment; that is, so as to appear in the congregation of the righteous at the day of judgment, when the righteous and the

^a Vid. Kimchi & Abendana in loc.

^r Διὰ τὸτο οὐκ ἀναστήσονται οἱ ἀσεβεῖς ἐν κρίσει. Sept. ideo non resurgent impii in Iudicio. Vulg.

wicked

wicked will be separated ; the one placed at Christ's right hand, and the other at his left, they will not rise when the righteous do ; for " the dead in Christ shall rise first ;" the wicked, though they will rise again, yet not in the first resurrection, or in the resurrection of life, but in the resurrection of damnation. Moreover, the word here used does not intend the resurrection of the wicked, but their standing ^f before God in a judicial sense, when raised ; and the meaning is, that they will not be able to stand, when the righteous Judge appears, with any degree of confidence, so as not to be ashamed, as the righteous will ; but, being filled with confusion and horror of mind, will not be able to lift up their heads, or open their mouths, to justify themselves, or vindicate their cause, and so consequently must fall, and not stand, in judgment.

^f Agreeable to this sense of the phrase, is the Chaldee paraphrase of these words, **לא יוכון רשעי ביומא רבא** " The wicked shall not be justified in the great day." Aben Ezra explains **לא יעמדו** by **יקומו** they shall not stand. Jarchi, on the place, says, there will be no **הקמת רגל** standing for the feet of the wicked in the day of judgment ; which is a form of speech used to express a lost cause. Some have thought that Kimchi himself designs this sense of the word, when he denies that there will be any **תקומה** for the wicked after death. Vid. Sixtin. Amamae Anti-Barbar. Bibl. L. 3. p. 699, 700, 967, 968; 973.

Another scripture, which may seem to countenance this notion ^t, that the wicked shall not rise from the dead, is Isai. xxvi. 14. "They are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased, they shall not rise." But these words, as I have observed in my former discourse, are either to be understood of the people of Israel, and are expressive of the prophet's complaint of their present state, that they were dead, and of his distrust of their future resurrection, to which he has an answer return'd in ver. 19. "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise;" or they are to be understood of those wicked lords, who had formerly had the dominion over these people, but were now dead, and should not live again on this earth, or rise again to tyrannise over them; and, if we consider the words in either sense, they cannot support an argument against the resurrection of the wicked.

The words of the prophet Daniel ^v, "And many of them who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake; some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt," though they are a plain and full proof of the resurrection of the

^t Vid. Jarchium & Aben Ezram in Is. xxvi. 14, 19. & Bechim in apud Buxtorf. in Jud. Synag. c. 3. p. 32.

^v Chap. xii. 2.

wicked, as well as of the righteous, yet are made use of by some Jewish writers* against it. It is observed, that the prophet does not say that all of them, but many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake; yea, it is said, that these many design only a few, and these the righteous, among the children of Israel. In answer to which, let it be observed, that the word "many" may be understood universally of all that sleep in the dust of the earth; in which sense the word is used in Psal. xcvi. 1. "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof." In the Hebrew text it is, let many isles, i. e. let all the isles be glad thereof; or it may be consider'd in a comparative sense, thus: they that sleep in the dust of the earth, and shall awake, are many in comparison of those few who will be alive and remain, when the dead are to be raised; for there will be some, though but a few, when compared with others, who shall not die, but be changed; or rather the words may be taken distributively after this manner: Of them that sleep in the dust of the earth, many shall awake to everlasting life, and

* Vid. Peacock. not. Misc. in Port. Moses, c. 6. p. 180, &c. Saadiah Gaon & Aben Ezra in Dan. xii. 2. Kimchi in Is. xxvi. 19.

many to everlasting shame and contempt ; which is just such a division of them, who are to be raised from the dead, as is given by our Lord, when he says ^y, “ All that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth ; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.” Many can never design a few only, as it must, if only the Israelites, who were the fewest of all people, and the righteous among them, are the subjects of the resurrection ; yea, if the righteous of all nations should be only raised, they are but a few in comparison of others. Besides, the prophet says, that some shall awake to everlasting shame, which cannot be said of the righteous, but must design the wicked ; therefore this prophecy is so far from being an argument against it, that it furnishes us with a very considerable one for the resurrection of the wicked.

There are some other passages of scripture, besides these, which are made use of by another ^z sett of men against this truth ; as Eccl. vii. 10. “ A good name is better than precious ointment, and the day of death than the day of ones birth.” Now,

^y John v. 28, 29.

^z Vid. Maccov. Theolog. Polem. c. 23. Quæst. 3. p. 189.

say they, if the wicked rise again, the day of their death must be worse than the day of their birth. To which it may be answer'd, that the wise man is not speaking of the wicked or reprobate, of whom it may be said, in some sense, that it would have been better if they had never been born, or had died immediately, rather than have lived to aggravate their condemnation by repeated iniquities, and with whom it certainly will be much worse after death, than now it is. The words respect the righteous, who are blessed in their death; for they die in the Lord, and rest from their labours, are free from sin and sorrow of every kind, and are with Christ, which is far better than to come into and be in this troublesome world. Likewise the words of the apostle Paul, in 1 Thess. iv. 16. "And the dead in Christ shall rise first," are urged against the resurrection of the wicked; from whence it is observed, that those who rise again, are such who are dead in Christ, and that these only are believers, and therefore the wicked shall not rise. To which it may be replied, that the apostle is, indeed, speaking of the resurrection of the saints, and not of the wicked, though not to the exclusion of their resurrection. It is certain, that they are only believers who are dead in Christ; but then it is neither here,
nor

nor elsewhere said, that only believers, or that only such who die in Christ, shall rise; yea, besides, the apostle says, that the dead in Christ shall rise first, which supposes that the wicked shall rise afterwards; for it would be an impropriety to say, that the dead in Christ shall rise first, if those who are not dead in Christ do not rise afterwards, a first resurrection supposes a second. I shall now proceed to consider the arguments and objections formed against the resurrection of the wicked; taken,

2. From reason. It is said, that God is very merciful ^a, and therefore if he will not eternally save the wicked, yet it is not reasonable to suppose that he will raise them from the dead, merely to torment them, it will be sufficient that they do not enjoy the happiness of the saints in heaven. To which I answer; it is true that God is very merciful, yet he will have mercy on whom he will have mercy; though mercy is natural and essential to him, yet the blessed fruits and effects of it, as enjoy'd by his creatures, are limited by, and dependant upon his sovereign will and pleasure, there are some of his creatures, of whom it is said ^b, “He that made them

^a Vid. Maccov. ib. Quæst. 2. p. 188.

^b Isai. xxvii. 11.

will not have mercy on them; and he that formed them will shew them no favour." Besides, it ought to be observed, that God is a righteous God, as well as merciful, and that one perfection of his is not to be set against another, though he is merciful, and delights in mercy, yet he is also the Judge of all the earth, who will do right. I have before proved, that it is necessary, from the justice of God, that the bodies of the wicked should be raised, not merely to be tormented, but that God may glorify his righteousness in their just punishment.

It is also argued^c, that Christ is the meritorious cause of the resurrection, and therefore the wicked, or reprobate, shall not rise again, because "Christ has merited nothing for them." To which I reply, the resurrection may be distinguished, as it is by Christ, into a resurrection of life, and a resurrection of damnation; that Christ is the meritorious cause of the former, but not of the latter. Christ is not only the exemplar, but the efficient and meritorious cause of the saints resurrection; he is the first fruits of them that slept; every one rises in his own order; Christ the first fruits, afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming. They that are Christ's, rise

^c Vid. Maccov. 16.

by virtue of their union to him, and thro' the power of his resurrection; not so the wicked, they shall, indeed, be raised by Christ, but not by virtue of his death and resurrection, or thro' any merit of his, but by his almighty power; their resurrection will not be the effect of his merit, as Mediator, but of his divine power, as Lord of the dead and living.

It is further urged^d, that the wicked die an eternal death, and therefore do not rise from the dead; for, say they, it implies a contradiction to say that they die an eternal death, and yet are raised from the dead. To which it may be answer'd, that there is a twofold death, a temporal and an eternal one. Temporal death is a separation of the soul from the body, and is what may be called the first death. Eternal death is a separation of body and soul from God, and a casting of both into hell, which is what the scripture calls the second death: Now this second or eternal death, is consistent with the resurrection of the body; nay, the resurrection of the body is requisite unto it. If it should be said^e, as it is, that corporal death is the punishment of sin, that punishment is not taken away in the wicked, and therefore

^d Vid. Maccov. Anti-Socin. L. 5. c. 3. §. 2. p. 158.

^e Vid. Maccov. Theolog. Polem. Quaest. 3. p. 187.

corporal death perpetually continues, and consequently there is no resurrection of the wicked from the dead. I answer, it is true that corporal death is one part of the punishment of sin, was at first threaten'd to it by God, and is inflicted on the wicked, as the just wages of it. It is true also, that the punishment of sin is perpetual, and is not removed, or taken away from the wicked; nor is it by the resurrection of the wicked, for their bodies will be raised by the power of God, in such a state and condition, as to bear eternal punishment, which shall be inflicted upon them, and which they shall endure, both in soul and body.

It is scarce worthy of notice what is objected by some against an universal resurrection^f, that the earth will not be sufficient to contain all. This objection may be startling to such who suppose that all men, righteous and wicked, when raised, will be gather'd together into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and be there judged; for if the whole earth cannot contain them, how should that valley? If it could be thought that there is any difficulty in the objection, it might be, in some measure, removed, by observing, that whereas the dead in

^f This is an objection which is moved by some Jewish writers, particularly by Abarbinel. Vid. Pocock. *nor. Misc.* in *Port. Moiss.* c. 6. p. 182. & *Maji Synopf. Jud.* loc. 25. §. 6. p. 338.

Christ shall rise first, they, with them that will be found alive, will be caught up together in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and shall be for ever with him; so that the earth will be left to the wicked, and, it is to be hoped, it may be allowed there will be room enough for them. From the whole, notwithstanding all these objections, it may be strongly concluded, that there will be a general resurrection of all mankind, both Jews and Gentiles, of all the wicked, and of all the righteous, in all nations. I now proceed,

Secondly, to enquire what that is of man which shall be raised from the dead. Man consists of soul and body; it is not the soul, but the body, which is raised; not the soul, for the soul dies not, and therefore cannot be said to be raised from the dead; nor does it sleep with the body in the grave, and therefore needs no awakening, nor will it be awaked when the body is.

1st. It dies not, and therefore cannot be said to rise from the dead. There were some^s Christians in Arabia who held that the soul died with the body, and, at the resurrection, revived and returned to its own body; but it is an immaterial and an

^s Vid. Euseb. Eccl. Hist. L. 6. c. 37. p. 233. Ed. Vales.
& Aug. de Haeres. c. 83.

immortal substance, which never dies. I do not propose to give you an elaborate discourse on this subject, and go through the argument of the souls immortality; this would require greater abilities than I am master of, and a larger compass than is allowed me for my subject. I shall just mention two or three things upon this head, in proof of the soul's immortality; which may be taken,

I. From the nature of the soul it self. It is of the same ⁿ nature with angels, who are immaterial and incorporeal spirits, and so not subject to corruption and death; they die not; yea, the soul of man has a likeness to God; it bears a resemblance of the divine nature. The image of God in man chiefly and principally consists in the soul; it is of God's immediate creation; it comes from him, and is the very breath of him. If we consider its several powers and faculties, especially the understanding and will ⁱ, we may well conclude it to be an immortal and never-dying substance. The mind or understanding not only apprehends and perceives things corporeal, temporal, and corruptible, but also such

ⁿ Παρεπλησίως ὃ τέτοις καὶ Ἀλλυμίων ἔοικεν ὑπολαβεῖν
ὡς ψυχῆς· φησὶ γὰρ αὐτὸν ἀθάνατον εἶνα διὰ τὸ εἰκέναι
τοῖς ἀθανάτοις. Aristotel. de Anima, L. 1. c. 2.

ⁱ Vid. Zanchium de operibus Dei, L. 2. c. 8. Quaest. 7.
p. 655, &c.

things as are immaterial, incorporeal, eternal, and incorruptible; such as angels, yea, God himself, which it could not do, was it not it self an immaterial, incorporeal, and immortal substance. It is capable of considering an endless eternity, tho' it is easy to observe the difference there is in the mind or understanding of man, with respect to that eternity, which preceded the creation of the world, and that which is to come; when it considers the former, it is quickly overwhelmed, it flutters and hangs its wing, and is obliged to descend; but when it fixes its thoughts upon the latter, how readily does it apprehend how it shall proceed without end; and with what pleasure does it roll over millions of ages in it? The reason of this difference is, because it is not from eternity, and has a beginning, but will continue to eternity, and have no end. And, besides that large stock of knowledge of various things, which men of the greatest understandings are furnished with, there is a natural and continual desire of knowing more, which will never be satisfied in this life; and this was one of the chief arguments Socrates used when in prison, to prove to his scholars the immortality of the soul; for this desire is not implanted in vain; the soul therefore must remain after death, when it will arrive to a more perfect knowledge of things.

The

The will has for its object universal good, and especially God, who is the chief good, which it desires to enjoy for ever: Its actions are free, and cannot be forced by any creature; no creature has a power over it, to force it or destroy it; it acts independent of the body, in willing and nilling, chusing and refusing, it uses no corporeal organ; yea, when the body is sick and infirm, and ready to die, the will is then active and vigorous, and shews it self to be so, either by a willingness, or an unwillingness to die; nay, generally speaking, the more severe the affliction is, and the nearer the approach of death, the more active is the will to be freed from agonies and pains, either by a restoration to health; or by a removal by death; which shews, that the soul does not sicken and grow languid, as the body does, nor dies with it. The soul is a pure immixed and simple^k substance; it is not composed of matter

^k Vid. Aristotél. de Anima, L. 1. c. 5. & L. 2. c. 1. & Ciceron. Tuscul. Quæst. L. 1.

Principiò mentem atque animam diversa fatemur :
Quando opus illius mens est, & nuncia quaedam.
Verba sed hæc eadem veluti jam trivimus usu :
Nanque animam mentem appellamus: non ita vero est.
Hæc crescit, firmata viros ubi fecerit ætas :
Decrescit pariter, longum fugientibus annis,
Urpote quæ auxilio, quæ corporis indiget usu.
At vis illa animæ est eadem pueroque senique

matter and form; nor is it a material form, educed out of the power of matter, as the souls of brutes, but is altogether spiritual and immaterial; it is not a body made up of the four elements, fire, water, earth, and air, which is capable of being resolved into them again, as our bodies are; it has

Semper, & ipsa omnis per totum d' dita corpus,
Non aliquid mixtum, non concretum ex elementis,
Sed purum aeternum, quodque omni est tabe solutum.

Nam qui corpoream dicunt cum corpore obire,
Et nasci: quâ est insani via nulla, feruntur.

Nam si corpus erit, terrâmvê ignemvê necesse est
Esse, vel humorem, teneri sive aeris auram,

Aut ex his quicquam, quod non rationibus ullis

Conferri constat; quando cognoscere coecos

Eventus rerum, quae gesta prioribus annis

Sic bene lustrare, & constanti mente tenere,

Non opus hoc terrae non aeris aut levis ignis

Vis dare quae leges potuit, quod corpus iniqua

Nosse? & quae nobis essent sudore paranda,

Suaviloquis dictis exponere & aurea nobis

Scribere praecepta & feros monuisse nepotes?

Porro quae corpus non sunt, ea corpora nosse

Nulla queunt.

Ergo aliud quicquam illa aliud, simplexque nec hilum

Fecis habens. Si corpus enim, vel corporis esset

Pars aliqua, iisdem nutrimentis surgeret aequae:

Quin etiam dapibus gravis & Bacchante Lyaeo,

Et prudens magis & multo sapientior esset.

Verum aliter res ipsa quidem: dum corpora laeta

Viribus exultant propriis, decedere vires

Consuevere animi, & purae vis insita menti

Indupedita jacet, nec sese attollit ad auras:

Quo magis & luxus membris, alimentaue defunt,

Illâ magis firmis perniciosior evolat alis.

Aonius Palearius de Immortalitate Anim. L. 2. lin. 82,

&c. inter opera ejus, p. 599. Ed. Amstel. 1696.

nothing

nothing contrary to it self, which can be destructive of it; it is neither hot nor cold, moist or dry, hard or tender: It is not as an accident in a subject, which, when the subject is destroy'd, is destroy'd with it; if it has any subject on which it depends, it must be the body; but it is so far from being dependant on the body, and perishing with it, that, on the contrary, when the soul departs, the body perishes. The soul has no other cause of its being but God; on him it depends, and by him it is preserved: He, indeed, could, if he would, annihilate, or reduce it to nothing; but, since it is evident he will not, we may conclude it is immortal, and will never die.

2. The immortality of the soul may be proved from the law of nature, the religion of mankind, the consciousness of sinful actions, and the fears and terrors of mind arising from thence, and also from the justice of God. The consent of all nations, Cicero says ¹, is to be reckon'd the law of nature; and, according to him ^m, it is the agreement of all nations, that the soul re-

¹ *Omni autem in re consensio omnium gentium, lex naturae putanda est. Ciceron. Tuscul. Quæst. L. 1.*

^m *Sed ut Deos esse natura opinamur, qualesque sint ratione cognoscimus: sic permanere animos arbitramur consensu nationum omnium: qua in sede maneant, quales que sint ratione discendum est. ib.*

mains after death, and is immortal. This, in general, may be true, and deserves notice, and is no inconsiderable proof of the soul's immortality ; but it must be owned, that there are many exceptions to it : Some, even of the philosophers, denied it, and others, who gave into it, spoke very doubtfully and confusedly of it, and deliver'd their sentiments about it, to use the words of Minutius Felix ⁿ, *Corrupta & dimidiata fide*, with a corrupt and divided faith, as though they did but half believe it. The immortality of the soul, is, no doubt, discoverable by the light of nature, and was originally the belief of men ; but as this light became dim by sin, and as men departed from the true religion, and went farther off from the professors of it, so they became vainer in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darken'd, and lost not only the knowledge of this, but many other truths. Thales the Milesian is ^o said to be the first who taught it ; tho' others say ^p, that Pherecydes the Scyrian was the first who asserted it. Some ascribe it to the Chaldeans ^q and Indian Magi, and others ^r to the Egyptians, as the first authors of it, who, perhaps, received it from

ⁿ Oclav. p. 37. • Vid. Diog. Laert. L. 1. in vita Thalís.
^p Cicero, in Tusc. Quæst. L. 1. ^q Pausanias in Messeniacis, p. 277. Ed. Hanov. ^r Herodot. L. 2. c. 123. p. 135. Ed. Gronov.

the posterity of Abraham the Chaldean, who dwelt among them. However, it is certain, that there is in man a natural desire after immortality, which is not in any but immortal creatures ; as it is also natural to him to be religious, hence some have chose rather to define man a religious than a rational animal : All nations profess some religion, and keep up some kind of religious worship ; the most blind and ignorant, barbarous and savage, are not without it. Now to what purpose is their religion ? and why do they worship a Deity, if there is no future state ? If the soul remains not after death, but at death perishes with the body, they need not be solicitous about the worship of God, and the performance of religious exercises, but say, “ Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we shall die ;” nor be diligent in the exercise of virtue, or be concern’d at the commission of sin. But, on the other hand, it is evident that there is a consciousness of sin in men, or there is in men a “ conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing, or else excusing, one another.” There are dreadful horrors, terrors, and stings of conscience, which wicked men are, at times, attended with ; they are seized with such dread and trembling, with such pannick fears, they cannot get rid of. If these, as some say, were

the effects of education, it is strange that they should be so general and extensive as they are, and more strange that none have been able to shake them off entirely; and stranger still, that those who have run the greatest lengths in Infidelity and Atheism, should not be able to free themselves from them. Hobbs, that bold advocate for Infidelity, who endeavour'd to harden himself, and others, in the disbelief of a future state, would be very uneasy, if, at any time, he was alone in the dark. These things not only shew that there is a divine being, to whom men are accountable for their actions, but that there is a future state after death, in which men shall live, either in happiness, or in misery. And, indeed, this is necessary from the justice of God, who is the Judge of all the earth, and will do right, in regarding the good, and punishing the wicked: It is easy to observe, that, in this life, good men are afflicted, and the wicked prosper; there are innumerable instances of this kind; the veracity, justice, and faithfulness of God are not so manifestly seen in bestowing favours and blessings upon good men, according to his promises, and in punishing wicked men according to his threatnings; it seems reasonable then to suppose that the souls of men are immortal, that their bodies shall be raised from the dead, and that there
will

will be a future state, in which good men shall be happy, and wicked men miserable.

3. The souls immortality may be proved from the scriptures, which expressly declare that the body may be killed, the soul cannot ^f; and that when "the dust shall return to the earth, as it was, the Spirit shall return to God that gave it." It may be concluded, from all those scriptures ^t, which speak of an everlasting covenant, which God has made with his people, "for God is not the God of the dead, but of the living," and from all the promises of everlasting life, which he has made unto them; as also from the account it gives ^v of the eager desires of the saints after future happiness, and of their assurance of enjoying it upon their dissolution, as well as from their particular commendations of their souls ^w, or spirits, into the hands of God at death, recorded in these writings. And, to add no more, we may be fully satisfied, by the sacred oracles ^x, that the souls of men, immediately upon the dissolution of their bodies, enter upon a state either of happiness or misery; all which proves the permanency of the soul after death, its separate existence, its fu-

^f Matt x. 28. Eccl. xii. 7. ^t Isai. lv. 3. Matt. xxii. 32. John vi. 40, 47. ^v Phil. i. 23. 2 Cor. v. 6, 8. ^w Psal. xlix. 15. Acts vii. 59. Luke xxiii. 46. ^x Luke xvi. 22, 23. Rev. vi. 9. 1 Pet. iii. 19.

ture state or condition, either of pleasure or pain. From the whole it follows, that if the soul dies not, it cannot be said to be raised from the dead, or be the subject of the resurrection.

2dly. The soul sleeps not with the body until the resurrection, and therefore needs no awaking, and cannot be said to be raised or awaked when the body is. The Socinians^y, and some of the Arminians say, that the soul, after death, is in a deep sleep, is insensible of happiness or misery, and destitute of all sense and operation. For the confutation of which sleepy notion, let the following things be consider'd.

1. That sleep belongs to the body^z, and not to the soul. Sleep is a binding up of the external senses, or a cessation of them from operation, the vapours filling the nerves and sensorii meatus, and so hindring the influx of the animal spirits. The immediate cause of it is thought to be the rest or immoveableness of the animal spirits in the

^y Vid. Maccov. Anti-socin. L. 5. c. 2. Calov. Socinism. Proflig. Sect. 10. Artic. 1. Qu. 3. p. 1039, &c. Peltii Harm. Remonstr. & Socin. Art. 22. Paragr. 2. p. 258.

^z Artius dicam, ne in somnum quidem cadit anima cum corpore, ne tum quidem sternitur cum carne. Etenim agitur in somnis & jactitatur: quiesceret autem si jaceret; & jaceret si caderet. Ita nec in veritatem mortis cadit quae nec in imaginem ejus ruit. Tertull. de Resurrect. c. 18. p. 391, 392. Ed. Rigalt. Quid ergo fiet in tempore isto? dormiemus? at enim animae nec in viventibus dormiunt. Corporum enim est somnus, quorum & ipsa mors cum speculo suo somno. Idem de Anima, c. 58. p. 356.

ven-

ventricles of the brain : But what is all this to the soul, which is an immaterial and incorporeal substance, and has none of these things, as nerves, animal spirits, sensorii meatus, or ventricles of the brain ; therefore sleep cannot belong to it, it has no place in it, nor can it be predicated of it.

2. When the body is asleep ^a, the soul is awake and active, as is evident in abundance of instances from dreams and visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon man, the soul understands and perceives, devises and contrives, reasons and discourses, chuses and refuses, grieves and rejoices, hopes and fears, loves and hates, and the like. Of like nature are ecstasies and raptures, when the body lies, as it were, dead, senseless, and void of motion : Such was the apostle's ^b case, when he says, he knew not whether he was in the body, or out of the body, and yet his soul was capable of receiving divine things, of seeing such sights, and hearing such words, which was neither lawful nor possible for him to express.

3. The soul being freed from the body, must be more active than when in it, espe-

^a Ἐννοήσατε ὅτι ἐγγύτερον μὲν τῷ ἀνθρωπίνῳ θανάτῳ ἔστιν ὕπνος ἢ ὅ τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ ψυχὴ τότε δὴπε θεοτάτη καταφαίνεται, καὶ τότε τὶ ἢ μελλόντων περὶ τότε ὥς εἰπε. μάλιστα ἐλθιδεῖται. Cyrus apud Xenophon. de Cyri institutione, L. 8. c. 47.

^b 2 Cor. xii. 4, 5.

cially as it is corrupted with sin, whereby it becomes a clog and an incumbrance to it, and a weight about it; so that it cannot, as it would, perform spiritual duties, "The Spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak;" but now when it is freed from the body, and joined to the spirits of just men made perfect, it must be more capable of serving God with spiritual joy and pleasure.

4. The soul separate from the body is most like to the angels, and its state, condition, and employment, much resemble theirs: Now nothing is more foreign to angels than sleep and inactivity, who always behold the face of God, stand ready to do his commandments, hearkening to the voice of his word; and no sooner do they receive orders from him, but they do his pleasure; they are continually before the throne of God, praising his name, celebrating the divine perfections, and "rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come."

5. If the souls of believers were, after death, to remain in a state of insensibility and inactivity, then the case of departed saints would be much worse than that of the living; for though the saints are now disturbed with a wicked and unbelieving heart, afflicted with Satan's temptations,
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and

and exercised with a variety of sorrows, yet at times they have communion with God through Christ, the discoveries of his love to their souls, the light of his countenance, and the comforts of his Spirit; they have the word and ordinances to refresh and support them, and are employ'd in the exercise of grace and discharge of duty; all which is both edifying and delightful to them, and which saints departed are deprived of, if this is their case, that their souls sleep with their bodies until the resurrection. If this be true, it would have been much better for the apostle Paul, and, I am sure, more to the advantage of the churches of Christ, if he had continued upon earth to this day, than to be sleeping in his grave, senseless and unactive. Certainly this great man knew nothing of this when he said^c, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain: but if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour; yet what I shall chuse I wot not. For I am in a strait between two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better: Nevertheless, to abide in the flesh, is more needful for you." Had the apostle known that he must have remained in a state of inactivity and uselessness, deprived of the commu-

^c Phil. i. 21, 22, 23, 24.

nion of Christ and his church, it would have been no difficulty with him, to determine which was most eligible, to live or die; nor can it be imagined that the desires of any of the saints would be so strong after a dissolution, as they sometimes are, when they say ^d, we are “willing rather to be absent from the body,” if they did not believe that they should be immediately “present with the Lord.” This notion then makes the condition of saints departed worse than that of the living; whereas the wise man says ^e, “I praised the dead, which are already dead, more than the living, which are yet alive;” the reason is, because ^f “blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.” As soon as dead, they enter upon a state of happiness and joy, and are employ’d in praising God, and singing the Lamb’s new song.

6. This notion is contrary to many ^g places of scripture, which assure us, that the soul after death returns to God that gave it, has an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, into which it is received, when dislodged from the earthly

^d 2 Cor. v. 8.

^e Eccl. iv. 2.

^f Rev. xiv. 13.

^g Eccl. xii. 7. 2 Cor. v. 1, 8.

house of its tabernacle, where it is present with the Lord, enjoying uninterrupted communion with him, in whose presence is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore. This was what Christ promised the thief upon the cross, when he said to him ^h, “ This day thou shalt be with me in paradise;” which would not have been true, if his soul slept with his body until the resurrection. The apostle John says ⁱ, that he “ saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held;” and we may be assured that these souls were not asleep, for of them he says, “ And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth.”

The advocates for soul-sleeping, make use of several ^k passages of scripture to support their opinion; particularly such as speak of persons sleeping when they die, of which there are ^l many instances. This is a way of speaking which was much used in the eastern countries, and is expressive

^h Luke xxiii. 43.

ⁱ Rev. vi. 9, 10.

^k Vid. Zanchium de operibus Dei, L. 2. c. 8. p. 674, &c.

^l 2 Sam. vii. 12. 1 Kings i. 21. Job vii. 21. Dan. xii.

2. 1 Cor. xv. 18. 1 Thess. iv. 14. John xi. 11, 12.

1 Cor. xv. 51.

of the death of the body, and its lying in the grave, because sleep is the image of death ; so to sleep with the Fathers, is to die as they did, and be buried where they were ; and to sleep in the dust, or in the dust of the earth, or in the grave, is to die, be buried, and lie there, which can be understood of the body only, and not the soul. When we read of any who fell asleep in Christ, or that sleep in Jesus, the meaning is, that they died in the Lord : When Christ said, “ Our friend Lazarus sleepeth,” he meant, that he was dead ; and when the apostle Paul says, “ We shall not all sleep,” he designs nothing else than that we shall not all die, for those who are alive at Christ’s coming, will be changed. If this mode of expression, and the scriptural instances of it, prove any thing in this controversy, they prove too much ; for if they prove that the soul sleeps with the body, they prove that the soul dies with it, since by sleep is meant no other than death.

Again, they urge all those ^m scriptures in favour of their notion, which represent the happiness of the saints, and the misery of the wicked, as not taking place until the last day, the end of the world, the

^m Matt. xiii. 40, 41, 49, 50. and xxv. 46. Luke xiv. 14. 2 Tim. iv. 8.

resurrection of the just, and the day of judgment, when the wicked shall go into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal, and therefore, during that time, their souls must be asleep. To which it may be replied, that there is a twofold state of the righteous and the wicked, after death, respecting their happiness and misery; the one is inchoate, or but begun; the other is full, consummate and perfect. Now it is of the latter that these scriptures speak, but not of the former; and it is allowed that the righteous will not be in the full possession of glory until the last day, when their bodies will be raised and united to their souls, and both together enter into the full joy of their Lord; nor will the wicked receive the full measure of their punishment until the judgment is over, when both soul and body shall be cast into hell: But then immediately upon death they both enter on a state of happiness or misery; the righteous, as soon as they are absent from the body, are present with the Lord; and the wicked are no sooner dead, but in hell they lift up their eyes.

Again, they endeavour to improve all those scriptures ⁿ to their advantage, which

ⁿ Psal. xxx. 9. and lxxxviii. 10, 11, 12. and cxv. 17, 18. Isai xxxviii. 18.

describe men, after death, as incapable of praising God; such as these: "What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Shall the dust praise thee? Shall it declare thy truth? Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead? Shall the dead arise and praise thee? Selah. Shall thy loving kindness be declared in the grave? or thy faithfulness in destruction? Shall thy wonders be known in the dark? and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness? The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence; for the grave cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee: They that go down into the pit, cannot hope for thy truth." From which it is infer'd, that if the souls of the saints, after death, are not employ'd in praising God, they must be asleep, or be destitute of sense and operation; for what work else can they be employ'd in? To this it may be answer'd, that though the saints, whilst their bodies are in their graves, and before the resurrection, do not, and cannot praise God in and with their bodies, of which only these scriptures can be supposed to speak; since nothing but the body goes down into the pit, or is laid in the grave, yet their souls may and do praise God, in like manner as the angels do; with whom, in the book of the revelation °,

° Rev. v. 11, 12, 13. and vii. 9, 10, 11, 12.

they

they are sometimes joined and represented as with them, glorifying God, praising his name, singing hallelujahs, and ascribing salvation to him that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever. Likewise, though the saints, after death, do not praise God before men, and in the midst of his church militant, as they did when in the land of the living, to which these passages of scripture refer; yet they may, and do, praise him before the angels, and in the midst of the church triumphant; so that, from hence, there is no reason to conclude, that the souls of believers, after death, till the resurrection, are in a state of inactivity, or sleep with their bodies; therefore seeing the soul sleeps not, it is not what will be awaked at the resurrection, or be the subject of it. I go on,

To prove that it is the body, which dies, that shall be raised. This is not annihilated, or reduced to nothing by death; it is not a new, airy, etherial or celestial body, which shall be united to the soul at the resurrection, but it will be the same numerical body, which dies, that shall be raised again; all which, I hope, to make appear, in the following part of my discourse.

1st. The body is not annihilated, or reduced to nothing by death. This is asserted

by Socinus ^p, and his followers, but is contrary both to reason and scripture. The body is not made out of nothing, nor will it be reduced to nothing; it consists of the four elements, and will be resolved into the same; and though it may, after death, pass under many changes and alterations, yet the matter and substance will always remain in some form, and in some place or another. Death is a separation, or a disunion, of soul and body, but not an annihilation of either; by death the whole compositum is dissolved, but neither part of it is reduced to nothing; the dust, or the body, which is of the dust, returns to the earth, as it was, and the soul, or spirit, to God, that gave it. Death is sometimes expressed by returning to the dust; but to return to the dust, and to be reduced to nothing, are two different things, unless it can be thought that dust is nothing. It is sometimes signified by seeing corruption, but corruption is one thing, and annihilation another; corruption supposes the thing in being, which is corrupted, annihilation takes away the being of it; notwithstanding corruption, the matter and substance, may remain,

^p Vid. Calov. Socinism. Proflig. Sect. 10. Artic. 1. Controv. 1. p. 1017.

though

though the form and quality may be alter'd, but annihilation leaves nothing. Death is sometimes figuratively expressed by sowing seed in the earth, and its rotting and corrupting there, by pulling down a house, and putting off a tabernacle. Now, though the seed sown in the earth dies, corrupts, and rots, yet it is not reduced to nothing; it neither loses its being, nor its nature, but in due time being quicken'd, buds and puts forth its seminal virtue; an house may be pulled down, and a tabernacle unpin'd, and the several parts be separated one from another, and yet the matter and substance of them all remain and continue. If the body is annihilated by death, Christ will lose that, which is a part of his purchase, and what is united to him, and the Spirit his dwelling place; for Christ has bought the bodies of his people, as well as their souls, and which, with their souls, are the members of him, and in which the Spirit of God dwells, as in his temple. Besides, if the body was reduced to nothing by death, the resurrection of the body would not be properly a resurrection, but a creation of a new body; and, indeed, this notion of annihilation is designed to make way for the introduction of that, the truth of which I shall presently examine.

As for those scriptures which speak of the dead as though they were not; as when Rachel is represented ^a weeping for her children, and refusing to be comforted, "because they were not;" the meaning is not, that they no where existed, had no being, or were reduced to nothing, but they were not in the land of the living, existing among men, and conversing with them; seeing it is said of Enoch ^r, that "he was not, for God took him;" though he was not on earth, yet he was in heaven with God; his body was not annihilated, but he was taken up, soul and body, to heaven. When the apostle says ^s, "Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats; but God shall destroy both it and them;" he does not design a destruction of the substance of the body, or of any part of it, as the belly, but respects the use of it, which shall be no more employ'd in receiving meats, to supply the natural wants of the body, though it will be necessary in the resurrection, as a constituent part of the body, and for the beauty of it.

2dly. It is not a new aerial, celestial body, or a spiritual body, as to nature and substance, which shall be united to the

^a Jer. xxx. 15.
vi. 15.

^r Gen. v. 24.

^s 1 Cor.

soul at the resurrection. It is allowed that the body will be different from what it now is, as to the qualities of it, but not as to its substance ; when the apostle compares ^t the body to seed sown in the earth, which is not quicken'd, except it die; and says of it, “ And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain ^v, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: But God giveth it a body, as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body.” He does not design a substantial difference between the body, which is laid in the grave, and that which is raised, but only a difference of qualities, as is between the seed, which is sown in the earth, and the plant, which springs from it; which two differ not in their specifick nature, but in some circumstances and accidents. That this is the apostle's meaning, is evident, when he says ^w, “ It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is

^t 1 Cor. xv. 37, 38

^v Γυμνόν κέκκεον, חֵטָה עָרומָה as in the Talmud Sanhedrim, fol. 90. 2. where the resurrection of the just is represented by naked wheat, buried in the earth, which springs up again with many cloathings. It seems probable, that it was usual with the Jews to express the doctrine of the resurrection by this metaphor, since both Christ and the apostle Paul make use of it.

^w 1 Cor. xv. 42, 43.

raised in power." The body of Christ * is compared to a grain of wheat, which is cast into the earth, and dies, and then springs up, and brings forth fruit; and yet it was not a spiritual body, as to substance, but a body consisting of flesh and bones, even the same he had before his death, and such will the bodies of the saints be after the resurrection. The apostle, indeed, says †, that the body, which is sown a natural body, will be raised a spiritual one; but by a spiritual body, he does not mean that the body will be changed into a spirit, and lose its former nature and substance, but that it will now be subject and subservient to the spirit or soul: It will be employ'd in spiritual service, and be delighted with spiritual objects, and will not be supported in a natural way, and by natural helps and means; such as meat, drink, cloaths, sleep, and the like, but will live in the manner as angels do. Hence the children of the resurrection are said to be like unto the angels. Again, when the apostle says ‡, "That flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption;" He does not design the human body, simply consider'd, but as attended with sin and corruption, or with frailty

* John xii. 24.

† 1 Cor. xv. 44.

‡ Ver. 50.

and mortality ; for flesh and blood, neither as sinful, nor as mortal, shall enjoy the heavenly state ; therefore, in order to that, “ this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.” If it should be a new aerial, celestial, or spiritual body, different in substance from what the body now is, which shall be united to the soul, it would not be a resurrection, but a creation ; besides, it is not consistent with the justice of God, that new bodies should be created, and which having never sinned, as those must be supposed to be, which are of God’s immediate creation, be united to the souls of the wicked, and be everlastingly punished with them. Nor can they be said to be truly human bodies, which are without flesh, blood and bones ; nor can they be said to be properly men who are incorporeal ; and, indeed, the same persons that have sinned, cannot be said to be punished, nor the same persons, who are redeemed, be glorified, unless the same body be raised ; which I shall,

3dly. Endeavour to prove. Job fully expresses ^a his faith in this doctrine, when he says, “ Though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God : whom I shall see for my self,

^a Job xix. 26, 27.

and mine eyes shall behold, and not another, though my reins be consumed within me." He believed that the same body, which should be destroy'd by worms, should be raised again, in which he should see God, and behold him with the self-same eyes of his body he then had, and not with the eyes of another, or of a stranger; and this he firmly believed, though his body would be destroy'd by worms, and his reins be consumed within him. The apostle Paul ^b strongly asserts this truth, when he says, " This mortal, this, and not another, pointing to his own mortal body, must put on immortality, and this corruptible must put on incorruption : So when this corruption shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying which is written, Death is swallowed up in victory;" which would not be true, if another, and not the same body, was raised from the dead. Again, in another place, he says ^c, that Christ will " change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body;" but if the same body is not raised, it will not be our vile body, but another, which will be changed, and fashioned like to Christ's

^b 1 Cor. xv. 53, 54.

^c Phil. iii. 21.

body. For the farther confirmation of this truth, let the following things be observed.

1. The signification of the word Resurrection^d. This properly signifies a raising up of that which is fallen, the same body, which fell by death, is raised by the power of God ; this is the proper sense of the word, and the just meaning of it in this article, nor can it have any other ; for if the same body is not raised, which fell, but another is given, it will not be a resurrection, but a creation.

2. The resurrection of the body is expressed by such figurative and metaphorical phrases, which manifestly shew that it will be the same body which will be raised that dies ; as when it is expressed by the quickening of seed, which is sown in the earth, and by an awaking out of sleep. Now as it is the same seed that is sown in the earth, and dies, that springs up, and shews it self in stalk, blade, and ear ; the same, I say, as to nature and substance ; for wheat produces wheat, and not any other grain, though with some additional beauty,

^d Sic & resurrectionis vocabulum non aliam rem vindicat, quam quae cecidit. Surgere enim potest dici & quod omnino non cecidit, quod semper retro jacuit. Resurgere autem non est, nisi ejus quod cecidit. Tertull. adv. Marcion. L. 5. c. 9. p. 592. Vid. Id. de Resurrectione carnis, c. 18. p. 391. Ed. Rigalt.

verdure, and greenness; it loses nothing that it had, though it grows up with that it had not before; so the same body that dies, is quicken'd and raised, though with additional glories and excellencies; the very same IT that "is sown in corruption, is raised in incorruption;" the same IT that "is sown in dishonour, is raised in glory;" the same IT that "is sown in weakness, is raised in power;" and the same IT that "is sown a natural body, is raised a spiritual body;" or else there is no meaning in the apostle's words. Likewise as death is compared to a sleep, so the resurrection is expressed by an awaking out of it. Now as it is the same body that sleeps that is awaked out of it, so it is the same body that falls asleep by death, that will be awaked in the resurrection.

3. The places from whence the dead will be raised, and which will be summoned to deliver them up, and out of which they will come, deserve our notice. Our Lord says^e, "All that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth." Every one that reads those words, will easily conceive that the meaning of our Lord is, that the same bodies which are in the graves shall come forth out of them. If other bodies should be produced

^e John v. 28, 29.

by God from other matter, and united to souls, they cannot, with truth, be said to come forth from the graves ; none but the same bodies, which are there laid, can be supposed to come forth from thence at the resurrection. It is a very trifling objection to this doctrine, made by a late writer^f, that the word “ Bodies ” is not used in the text. What of men is laid in the graves but their bodies ? And what can be expected to come forth from thence but their bodies ? And what but the same bodies ? It is a very silly question that is put by the same writer^g, when he asks, “ Would a well meaning searcher of the scriptures be apt to think, that if the thing here intended by our Saviour, were to teach and propose it as an article of faith, necessary to to be believed by every one, that the very same bodies of the dead should be raised ; would not, I say, any one be apt to think, that if our Saviour meant so, the words should rather have been *πάντα τὰ σώματα ἃ ἐν τοῖς μνημείοις*, i. e. all the bodies that are in the graves, rather than all who are in the graves ; which must denote persons, and not precisely bodies ? ” To which I reply, that supposing it our Lord’s design, as I verily believe it was, to express this ar-

^f Lock’s Essay on Human Understanding, Vol. I. p. 315. Ed. Sixth.

^g Ib.

ticle of our faith, that the same bodies of the dead shall be raised, there was no need that the word "Bodies" should be expressed; it was enough to say, that all that are in the graves shall come forth; and every well meaning searcher of the scriptures will be easily induced to think, that our Lord designs that the same bodies of men that are laid in the graves shall come forth; nor is any thing more usual, in common speech, than to denominate men sometimes from one part, and sometimes from another; as when we say, they are mortal, or wise, or foolish. Again, we are told, in the sacred writings, that "the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and hell deliver'd up the dead which were in them." Now if the grave and sea, at the awful summons, shall deliver up the dead, which are in them, they must deliver the very same which are laid in them; for what else can such expressions design?

4. The subject of the resurrection is the body, and that such as it is in this life, vile and mortal. Christ will "change our vile body, and fashion it like unto his glorious body;" and "he that raised up Christ from the dead, shall quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit, that dwelleth in you." These bodies must be the same we carry about with us now; for what else can be called vile and mortal? Surely, not
bodies

bodies a new created, which are said to be spiritual and celestial, and which never sinned, and so not subject to mortality. This also destroys an observation of a writer ^h of great note, that the word σώματα, bodies, is not used through the New Testament, when mention is made of the resurrection of the dead; his words are these: “ He who reads with attention this discourse of St. Paul’s, (meaning 1 Cor. xv.) where he discourses of the resurrection, will see, that he plainly distinguishes between the dead that shall be raised, and the bodies of the dead; for it is, νεκροί, πάντες, οἱ, are the nominative cases to ἐγείρονται, ζωοποιηθήσονται, ἐγερθήσονται, all along, and not σώματα, bodies; which one may, with reason, think, would some where or other, be expressed, if all this had been to propose it as an article of faith, that the very same bodies shall be raised. The same manner of speaking the Spirit of God observes, all through the New Testament, where it is said, Raise the dead, quicken or make alive the dead, the resurrection of the dead.” Now, not to take notice of the dead bodies of the saints, who were raised after the resurrection of Christ, of whom it is said ⁱ, “ And many bodies of the saints which slept arose.” The obser-

^h Lock, ib.

ⁱ Matt. xxvii. 52.

vation will appear to be wrong, if we consider the passages now mentioned, where Christ is said ^k to change, τὸ σῶμα τῆς ταπεινώσεως ἡμῶν, our vile body, or the body of our humility, which belongs to, and is expressive of the resurrection of the dead, and where God is said to quicken τὰ θντὰ σώματα ὑμῶν, your mortal bodies: Besides, in the discourse of the apostle Paul, concerning the resurrection, in 1 Cor. xv. a question is asked, “How are the dead raised? ^l and πῶς σώματι, with what body do they come? And an answer is given, “It is sown a natural body, and it is raised, σῶμα πνευματικόν, a spiritual body.” Besides, how can the apostle plainly distinguish, as this author says he does in this discourse, between the dead that shall be raised, and the bodies of the dead, if the bodies of the dead all along are not mentioned.

5. The instances of resurrections that are already past, prove that it will be the same body which will be raised at the general resurrection. The saints which arose at the resurrection of Christ, rose with the same bodies which were laid in the graves; for it is said, that “the graves were open’d, and many bodies of the saints which slept arose.” Our Lord Jesus Christ arose from

^k Phil. iii. 21. Rom. viii. 11.

^l 1 Cor. xv. 35, 44.

the dead with the same body which hung upon the cross, and was laid in the grave, as is evident, from the print of the nails in his hands and feet; nor was it an aerial or spiritual body, as to its substance; for it consisted of flesh and bones, which a spirit does not, and might be felt and handled. Now Christ's resurrection was an exemplar of the saints, their bodies shall be changed and fashioned like unto his glorious body. Enoch and Elijah were translated into heaven in the very same bodies they had when here on earth; and those which will be alive at Christ's second coming, will be changed, and caught up, in the very same bodies in which they will be found, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall be for ever with him. Now it is not reasonable to suppose, that our Lord, who partook of the same flesh and blood with the children of God, should be raised and glorified in the same body, and not they in their same bodies, for whose sake he assumed his; or that some of the saints should have the same bodies they had whilst here, and others not.

6. If the same body is not raised, how will the end of the resurrection be answer'd, which is the glorifying of God's grace in the salvation of his people, and of his justice in the damnation of the wicked? Hence the one is said to come forth to the resurrection of

life, and the other to the resurrection of damnation: How shall every one receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad, if the same bodies are not raised, who have done good or evil? Where would be the justice of God, if other bodies, and not those which Christ has purchased with his blood, the Spirit has sanctified by his grace, and which have suffer'd for the name of Christ, should be glorified; as also if other bodies, and not those which have sinned against God, blasphemed the name of Christ, and have persecuted his saints, should suffer eternal vengeance, and be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power? Where would be the veracity of God, either in his promises or threatenings, if the good things he has promised, are not bestowed upon the same persons to whom he has promised them, and if the punishment he has threaten'd, is not inflicted on the same persons to whom he has threaten'd it? for how they can be the same persons, without having the same bodies, I don't understand. Besides, what a disappointment will it be to the saints, who are waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of their body, from all weakness and corruption, if not that, but another body, shall be given them, and be

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united

united to their souls; and be glorified with them?

In fine; if the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, which the scriptures of the Old and New Testament hold forth, does not intend the resurrection of the same body; it is no other, nor better, than a transmigration of souls into other bodies, which was the old Pythagorean notion.

It is a low and mean quibble; that a man has not the same body at one time as at another, because he may be taller, or bigger, fatter or leaner, at one time than at another. 'Tis true, that the body has not always the same fleeting particles; which are continually changing and altering, but it has always the same constituent parts; so that a man may be always said to have the same body, and to be the same man: It is the same body that is born that dies, and the same that dies that shall rise again. The several alterations and changes it undergoes, with respect to tallness or largeness, fatness or leanness, does not destroy the identity of the body. If this quibble would hold good in theological controversies, and in philosophical disputes, it might also in political affairs; and so one that owes another a sum of money, and has given his note or bond for it, after a term of time, may deny that he owes the other any thing, or that he ever bor-

row'd any thing of him, and that that is his hand writing, since he has not the same body he had before. A murderer, taken up some years after the murder is committed, may plead he is not the same man, and that it was not done with the same hands he has now, and therefore, in justice, ought not to suffer. And the same may be observed in ten thousand other instances, whereby confusion must be introduced into commonwealths, and justice and order everted in governments. This observation may be sufficient to stop the mouths of such impertinent cavillers, who are ready to ask such questions as these : Whether the body, at the resurrection, will have all the individual particles of matter it ever had ? or whether it will be raised, as when it was at such an age, or in such a plight ? or as it was emaciated by distempers, or as laid in the grave ? It is enough that it will have the constituent parts it ever had, which is sufficient to support the identity of it. I shall now proceed,

IV. To consider the particular concern which God the Father, Son, and Spirit, have in this stupendous work. 'Tis a work that a creature is unequal to, and incapable of. It is always ascribed to God ; it is God that raises and quickens the dead. If it was ever refer'd to a creature, it might
be

be well judged incredible ; but it need not be thought incredible that God should raise the dead. Now as all God's works, *ad extra*, are common to all the three Persons, and this being such an one, they are all three concern'd in it. And,

1. God the Father is concerned herein. The resurrection of Christ is frequently attributed to him, and so is the resurrection of the saints, and are sometimes mention'd together ; the former as the pledge and earnest of the latter, as saith the apostle ^m, “ And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power ;” that is, God the Father has raised up the Lord Jesus, and we may be assured that he will also raise up us, since as he is able to raise the one, he is able to raise the other, and that by his own absolute, original and underived power ; which assurance of faith, in the doctrine of the resurrection, the apostle expresses in another place ⁿ, in stronger terms, “ We having the same Spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken ; we also believe, and therefore speak, knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you ;” where also the resurrection of the saints is ascribed to God

^m 1 Cor. vi. 14.

ⁿ 2 Cor. iv. 14.

the Father, who is manifestly distinguish'd from the Lord Jesus, whom he rais'd up, and by whom he will raise up the saints; not that Christ is the Father's instrument, or medium of operation, by which he will raise the dead; for,

2. Christ, as God, being equal with the Father, is a coefficient cause of the resurrection; "As the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will." He is the resurrection and the life, i. e. the Author of the resurrection unto life; he is the Prince of life, has the keys of hell and death in his hands, and can open the grave at his pleasure, and call forth the dead; at whose all-powerful and commanding voice, all that are in the graves shall come forth; which will be a further proof both of his omnipotence and omniscience; this will shew that he is the Almighty, since he can "change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working, whereby he is able even to subdue all things to himself;" and that he knows all things, and is that living Word, before whom every creature is made manifest, and all things are naked and opened; for if he was not omniscient, he could not know where every particle

of matter is lodged, and, if he was not omnipotent, he could not collect them, range them in their proper places, and unite them together. That he is equal to this work, we may conclude, from the resurrection of his own body; he had power to lay down his life, and take it up again; he raised up the temple of his body, after it had been destroy'd three days, and so was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." As he is the Mediator, he is the meritorious and procuring cause of the resurrection; there is an influential virtue in his resurrection, not only on the justification and regeneration of his people, but also upon their resurrection from the dead. He is "the first fruits of them that slept," the pledge and earnest of the saints resurrection; they are in a sense risen with him, and shall certainly be raised by him, by virtue of their union to him, as their risen Lord. As man his resurrection is the pattern and exemplar of the saints, their bodies shall be fashioned like to his; as his body was raised incorruptible and immortal, powerful and glorious, so shall theirs, in such manner, as never to die more, or see corruption, or be attended with distempers and death.

3. God the Holy Ghost has a joint and equal concern with the Father and the Son in this amazing work. The resurrection of Christ is the act of all the three Persons: The Father glorified his Son by raising him from the dead; he “raised him from the dead, and gave him glory.” Christ of himself took up the life, which he had laid down; and though he was “put to death in the flesh,” yet “was quicken’d by the Spirit;” so the resurrection of the saints from the dead, will be the act of all the three Persons, not only of the Father and the Son, but also of the Spirit^p; for “if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.” The bodies, as well as the souls of the saints, are united to Christ, by virtue of which union the Spirit of Christ dwells in them; not in their souls only, but in their bodies^q also, “What, know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you?” Now as the union between Christ and his people is not dissolved by death, so neither does the Spirit of God forsake the dead bodies of the saints, or neglect to take care of them; the dust of the saints is under his peculiar care and guar-

^p Rom. viii. 11.^q 1 Cor. vi. 19.

dianſhip, and, at the laſt day, the Spirit of life from God, ſhall enter into them, and they ſhall live and ſtand upon their feet. Thus all the three divine Perſons, Father, Son, and Spirit, will be concern'd in the reſurrection of the juſt.

The means by which God will do this great work, and the time when he will do it, the ſcriptures are not altogether ſilent about. As to the means, we are told^r, that “all that are in the graves ſhall hear his (i. e. Chriſt's) voice, and ſhall come forth;” that “the Lord himſelf ſhall deſcend from heaven with a ſhout, with the voice of an arch-angel, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Chriſt ſhall riſe;” and that the “trumpet ſhall ſound^r, and the dead ſhall be raiſed incorruptible;” but whether by the voice of Chriſt and the arch-angel, the ſhout, and the trumpet of God, we are to underſtand ſo many ſeveral diſtinct things, or one and the ſame thing, is not eaſy to determine. The voice of the arch-angel, who ſhall deſcend with Chriſt, may be called the voice of Chriſt, becauſe formed at his command, the ſame

^r John v. 28, 29. 1 Theſſ. iv. 16. 1 Cor. xv. 52.

^f The Jews have a notion that a trumpet ſhall be blown at the time of the reſurrection, as was at the giving of the law, which ſhall quicken the dead. Vid. Targ. Jon. in Exod. xx. 18. & Mechilta in Kettoreth Haſſamim in 1b. & Abarbinel. Maſhmiah Jeſhuah, fol. 11. 4.

may be signified by the trumpet of God, which shall be sounded, and that, may be signified by the shout which shall be made, either by the arch-angel alone, or by all the angels with him, and this shout no other ^v than some violent claps of thunder, which are the voice of God; like those which were heard when God descended on mount Sinai, and gave the law from thence, which, perhaps, were formed by the ministry of angels: And this the apostle Peter ^v may design, when he says, “ The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat;” or, by the voice of Christ, may be meant an audible and articulate voice of his, so powerful, as to reach all that are in their graves; such as that was which was heard at the grave of Lazarus, where “ he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth;” or as that which Saul heard from heaven, saying, “ Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me;” or as John heard, which he says, “ was as the voice of many waters;” or, perhaps, the voice of Christ may design the power of Christ, which shall be exerted

^v See Lightfoot, Vol. I. p. 680. who rightly observes, from Talmud Sanhed. fol. 97. 1. that it is said, that there will be voices and thunders a little before the coming of the Messiah, which the Glosse upon the place interprets of the voices of the Son of David. See also Megillah, fol. 17. 2.

^v 2 Pet. iii. 10.

upon,

upon, and shall be felt and perceived by all that are in their graves, when the archangel shall sound the last trumpet, attended with the shout of all the rest of the angelick host.

As for the time when the dead shall be raised, it cannot be exactly fixed, nor does it become us curiously to enquire into it : “ It is not for us to know the times and the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power ^w.” As no man knows the day and hour of judgment, so no man knows the day when the dead will be raised. In general, it is said ^x, that it will be in the last day, and at the coming of Christ, at which time the dead in Christ shall rise first ; that is, they shall rise before the wicked ^y, which will be the first resurrection : Not that the martyrs shall rise before the rest of the righteous, but all the righteous shall rise at Christ’s coming ; but whether their rising will be successive, or be at once, in a moment, is not very material. The change that will be made

^w Acts i. 7. ^x John vi. 39, 40, 44, 54. and xi. 24.
¹ Cor. xv. 27.

^y The Jews are of opinion, that the righteous shall rise first, especially those who die and are buried in the land of Canaan. Vid. Talmud Jerus. Tract. Celaim in En Yaacob, fol. 4. 2. & Gloss in ib. Beresh. Rabba, Parash. 96. fol. 83. 4. Ed. Amstelod. Zohar. in Gen. fol. 68. 4. & 83. 1. & 100. 3.

on the living, will be in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye; but it is not so manifest, that the resurrection of the dead will be so quick and sudden, but rather that it will be successive; since it is said ^z, “ Every man in his own order ” shall be raised; which may be understood either of order of time, so that they that died first, shall be first raised; or of dignity, so that those who have been the most eminent for gifts, grace, usefulness, &c. shall be first called forth out of their graves, which, perhaps, may be the differing glory that will be upon the saints at the resurrection; of which the apostle speaks, saying ^a, “ There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory, so also is the resurrection of the dead.”

There are many curious and needless questions which are asked concerning the resurrection, and the state of those who are raised; as, whether abortions, or untimely births, shall be raised? at what age, and in what stature the dead shall rise? whether with their present deformities or not? whether there will be any distinction of sexes? and whether persons shall know one another? But

^z 1 Cor. xv. 23.

^a Ver. 40, 41.

these I shall not give my self the trouble to answer, but pass on to that which will be more useful ; which is,

V. And lastly, To shew the importance and use of this doctrine.

1st. I shall consider the importance of it. It is a fundamental article of the Christian faith ; it is called ^b the foundation of God, which stands sure ; though some deny it, and others endeavour to sap it, but none can destroy it : It is reckon'd among ^c the first principles of the doctrines of Christ, and is joined with eternal judgment, which it precedes, and in order to which it is absolutely requisite. The resurrection of Christ stands and falls with it ; for “ if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen ; and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain ^d.” The whole gospel is connected with it ; if there is no truth in this, there is none in that. As the doctrine of the resurrection receives confirmation from the doctrines of personal election, the gift of the persons of the elect to Christ, the covenant of grace, redemption by Christ, union with him, and

^b 2 Tim. ii. 19.

^c Heb. vi. 1, 2.

^d 1 Cor. xv.

13, 14.

the sanctification of the Spirit, so these can have no subsistence without supposing that. If the dead rise not, there can be no expectation of a future state; "Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished^e." And so there is no difference between them and the brutes, "As the one dieth, so dieth the other;" and if this be the case, "if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable^f." Besides, as has been observed, the resurrection is absolutely necessary to eternal judgment: without it the judgment cannot proceed; for how should "every one receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad," if his body is not raised. To say no more, practical religion much depends upon the truth of this doctrine; the denial of it must open a door to all manner of licentiousness. The opposers of this doctrine have been observed^g, in all ages, to be very bad livers; and, indeed, it need not be wonder'd at, it is a natural consequence, "If the dead^h rise not, let us eat and drink, for to morrow we

^e 1 Cor. xv. 18.

^f Ver. 19.

^g Nemo enim tam carnaliter vivit, quam qui negant carnis resurrectionem. Negantes enim ejus paenam, despiciunt & disciplinam. Tertull. de Resurrect. c. 11. p. 386.

^h 1 Cor. xv. 32.

die." On the other hand, where this doctrine is firmly believed, and strictly attended to, there will be a studious concern to glorify God, by a becoming life and conversation. This may be observed in the experience and practice of the apostle Paulⁱ, which he delivers in these words, "And have hope towards God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the just and unjust; and herein, says he, *ἐν τῷ*, upon this account, do I exercise my self to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man."

2dly. I shall now consider the use of this doctrine; whatever is important, and of moment, must be useful. This doctrine is of use,

1. For instruction. It serves to enlarge our views of the divine perfections; as the immutability of God in his purposes; his faithfulness in his promises; his omniscience, which extends to all creatures, and every thing that belongs to them; and his omnipotence, which nothing can withstand. Those who deny the resurrection, must not only be ignorant of the scriptures, but of the power of God, as the Sadducees were. This doctrine teaches us to think

ⁱ Acts xxiv. 15, 16.

highly of Jesus Christ, as God over all, blessed for ever, as possessed of all divine perfections; since he is the resurrection and the life, the first fruits of them that slept; he is the efficient cause by whom, and the meritorious cause through whom, and the exemplar according to whom the resurrection of the saints will be. The concern which the Holy Spirit has in our resurrection, may serve to endear him to us, and teach us not to grieve him, by whom we are “sealed unto the day of redemption,” i. e. of our bodies from corruption and death; he not only sanctifies our bodies, and dwells in them, but has the care of our dust, and will quicken it at the last day. What an instruction is this doctrine to faith and trust in God, Father, Son, and Spirit? If God can and will raise the dead, what is it he cannot do? Faith should not stagger at any thing which God has promised to perform, or be discouraged at any difficulties in its way, or at any trials and afflictions it meets with. The consideration of this, that God quickens the dead ^k, quicken’d Abraham’s faith, so that he stagger’d not at the promise through unbelief, though there were difficulties attending it insuperable to nature. And

^k Rom. iv. 17, 18, 19, 20.

when the apostles ¹ had the sentence of death in themselves, they were directed not to trust in themselves, “but in God, which raiseth the dead, who, say they, deliver’d us from so great a death, and doth deliver; in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us.” Moreover, this doctrine may teach us, that all due and proper care ought to be taken of our bodies, both whilst living, and when dead. All proper care ought to be taken of them whilst living; though they are not to be pamper’d, they are not to be starved: They are to be fed and cloathed, according to the blessings of life, which God bestows upon men, provided the bounds of moderation and decency be observed; for to transgress these by luxury and intemperance, is not to use our bodies well, but to abuse them: And when the body is dead, care ought to be taken that it be decently inter’d, which may be confirmed by the examples of Abraham, Joseph of Arimathea, and others.

2. This doctrine is of use for consolation. The day of the resurrection will be a day of consolation to the saints. Hence the Syriac version reads those words ^m of Martha, “I know that he shall rise again,

¹ 2 Cor. i. 9, 10.

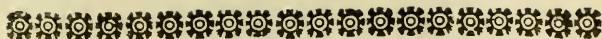
^m John xi. 24.

in the resurrection at the last day:" Thus " I know that he shall rise again, in the consolation at the last day." Then will be the consummation of the saints joy and comfort, and a believing view of it now must be very delightful to them; as they are waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body, so they may lift up their heads with joy, because this their redemption draweth near. The consideration of this doctrine must be a great support to saints under trials and afflictions, under diseases and distempers of body, in the views of death, and the several changes the body shall undergo after death; I say, it must be a very comfortable consideration, that, in a little time, all these trials will be ended; there will be no more diseases, nor death: And though the body, for a while, shall be the food of worms, and return to its original dust, yet it shall be raised immortal and incorruptible, powerful and glorious; " This mortal must put on immortality, and this corruption must put on incorruption;" and in our flesh shall we see God, and enjoy the company of angels and saints. To conclude: This doctrine must be of great use to support persons under the loss of near relations; when they consider, that though they are dead, they shall

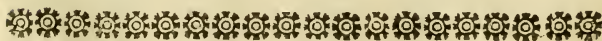
shall rise again ; though they have parted with them, it is but for a time ; and therefore they should not “ sorrow ”, even as others, which have no hope ;” for if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him ; wherefore we may comfort one another with these words, “ And so shall we be ever with the Lord.”

ⁿ 1 Theff. iv. 14, 17, 18.





A
VINDICATION
OF THE
EVANGELICAL DOCTRINE
OF
MAN'S SALVATION
BY THE
FREE GRACE OF GOD,
FROM THE CHARGE OF
PROMOTING LICENTIOUSNESS.
By ABRAHAM TAYLOR;
Minister of the Gospel.



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ROM. V. 20, 21. VI. 1, 2.

Where sin abounded, grace much more abounded; that as sin has reigned to death, so grace might reign, through righteousness, to eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord. What shall we say then? shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid: how shall we, who are dead to sin, live any longer in it?

WHEN rational creatures rebel against their righteous and mighty Maker, they cut themselves off from all right, to claim any benefit or blessing at his hands: They deserve nothing from him, but wrath

and indignation ; and if they are recover'd from the ruin they have brought on themselves, and are made partakers of salvation, it is from the good pleasure of his will ; and it must be in a way that does not injure his perfections. God foreknew the fall of creatures, indued with reason ; and it lay entirely in his breast, whether he would provide for their rescue, or for the deliverance of any number of them, or whether he would leave them, to feel the bitter consequences of their apostacy : If the last is supposed, he acts no injustice, for he gives them no more than their deserts. When a numerous company of the mighty potentates of heaven, conspired against the highest, under Satan's banner, proudly thinking to be more glorious than God had made them, he, who brought them into being, by the word of his power, cast them out of those thrones of honour, in which they sat exalted, banished them his presence, and doom'd them to suffer eternal years of woe and pain. He had not a thought of mercy towards the princes of light, when rebellion rose among them, but entirely cast them off, and has reserved them in everlasting chains, under darkness, to the judgment of the great day, at which time fulness of torment will be inflicted upon them, and they will not be suffer'd to range about the world,

world, as they do at present, but will be shut up in that prison, where sorrow will take up its abode, and where despair will for ever keep up the horrors of its gloomy reign. No one, who owns the scriptures, ever had the face to charge God with injustice, for condemning the morning stars to blackness and darkness. He might, without any stain to his honour, have left the whole race of sinful men to destruction; for they, after transgression, have no more claim to his favour, than the devils: But he was pleased to choose a remnant of them, in whose salvation he might make known the riches of his grace. That this might be done, without injury to his other perfections, he appointed Christ to be the Redeemer, to satisfy his justice, and so to procure for those for whom he died a freedom from all evil, and a title to all good. The salvation of sinners, whether we regard it, in its platform from eternity, or in its being actually brought about in time, or in its entire completion at the great rising day, is all by the grace of God, and on account of what Christ has done and suffer'd, and is not in the least owing to any thing which is in man, or is done by him. The revelation which gives an account of man's salvation by grace, is what is properly stiled the gospel of God; and when men hear the evangelical doctrine
open'd

open'd and unfolded, unless the Holy Spirit leads them to the knowledge of the truth, they either rise up with rage against it, or they abuse it. Conceited mortals, who are for working out their salvation by their own strength, cannot bear that the glory of it should be given entirely to the grace of God, and not partly to their feeble endeavours; therefore they are filled with hatred against the doctrine of grace, and wickedly and maliciously charge it with opening a door for licentiousness; and in drawing this spiteful indictment, against the glorious gospel of the blessed Jesus, it is to be fear'd, they have been not a little strengthen'd by the odious consequences, which are sometimes attempted to be deduced from it, by such as wrest it, to countenance their immoralities. These, because they do not care to leave their sins, or to practise the difficult duties of repentance, self-denial, and mortification, have been ready to say, that if salvation is by grace, they shall certainly be saved, seeing they are elected, however they live; but herein they discover their great ignorance of the design of God, in the Christian scheme of salvation, which was not barely to debase man, and to exalt Christ, but to advance holiness.

The great apostle of the Gentiles, in the words which have been chose to speak from,
decla-

declared, that when sin had brought men under the desert of eternal destruction, and so had abounded and reigned to death, grace much more abounded, to bring about the salvation of men, and so reigned to eternal life ; but that it only reigned in a way of righteousness, because God would not dishonour his perfections ; and that therefore it could reign to life no other way than by Christ, who could, by his active and passive obedience, satisfy the offended justice of God, and procure eternal life for sinners. He was sensible that when he had asserted, that the grace of God was glorified, in the salvation of them who had transgressed, some perverse creatures might plead, that the more men sin, the more the grace of God is glorified in their salvation, and might hence infer, that they may abound in sin, that more glory may be brought to the grace of God: He therefore put the question, whether men might continue in sin, that grace might abound? which he answer'd in the negative, in a way that shew'd his utmost abhorrence of the vile suggestion ; and, to support his answer, he added a very strong argument, in the form of a question, to let us know, that it was morally impossible, that if we are dead to sin, we can continue in the wilful commission of iniquity. This accomplish'd minister of Christ, at the
same

same time that he advanced the grace of God, took care to guard his doctrine against pernicious consequence, which vain and ignorant pretenders might draw from it: He, when he exalted grace, recommended holiness, as necessary: He acted like a wise master builder, who does not bestow a great measure of garniture on the front of the structure, which he rears, and leaves the other parts entirely without ornament, but takes care that the whole edifice be well proportioned and compacted together, and that all the parts of it be set off in the best manner.

It has been common at all times, and never more than in our day, for the opinionated sons of flesh to rail at the doctrine of salvation by grace, and to charge it with encouraging licentiousness; therefore, to vindicate this glorious doctrine against so vile and diabolical a calumny, cannot be unreasonable or improper: And it may, very easily, be made to appear, that there is not the least foundation for such an unrighteous accusation.

I. I shall shew what we understand by the scripture doctrine of man's salvation by the free grace of God, and shall give a short summary of those evangelical points, which we take into our notion of it; in doing of which, I shall evince, in the general,

neral, that it does not encourage licentiousness.

In the oracles of truth, the salvation of men is attributed to the free and the abundant grace of God. The apostle Paul has declared, that the design of God in saving sinners, was to display the riches of his grace, in the following remarkable passage; “ God, who is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith he loved us, when we were dead in sins, has quicken’d us;—that he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us through Christ; for by grace are you saved, through faith, and that not of your selves, it is the gift of God, not by works, lest any one should boast ^a.” It is not by the works of the law, but by free mercy, that we are saved; for we are told, that “ the kindness and love of God our Saviour appear’d in that, not by works of righteousness, which we had done, but according to his mercy he saved us ^b.” It is, to the comfort of all that are weary, and heavy laden with the burden of sin, declared, that “ the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is through one, even Jesus Christ, has abounded to many; and that they who receive abundance of grace, and the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life

^a Eph. ii. 4, 5, 7, 8, 9.

^b Tit. iii. 4, 5.

by one, even Jesus Christ ^c." All saving blessings are convey'd to us in and through Christ, because he purchased them for us, by the infinite merit of his obedience and death; yet salvation is ascribed to rich, free, and abundant grace, because it was by grace that we were appointed to salvation, and it was love which provided a Redeemer for us, who might satisfy infinite justice for us, when we were guilty, might reconcile us, when we were enemies, and might save us, when we were lost; that so grace might reign, through righteousness, in our recovery from ruin.

Salvation, taken in the general, is ascribed to the grace of God, in the sacred volumes; and farther, all the principal parts of it, such as election, justification, regeneration, and effectual calling, and the consummating our happiness, are declared to be from grace. If we consider the heirs of salvation, as chose by God, and predestinated to eternal glory, it is from his sovereign grace; it is expressly said, "God has chose us in Christ, before the foundation of the world; having predestinated us to the adoption of children, through Jesus Christ, to himself, according to the sovereign pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace ^d." If

^c Rom. v. 15, 17.

^d Eph. i. 4, 5, 6.

we regard those who are redeem'd from wrath, as having their sins forgiven, and being justified, it must be granted, that it is because of the active and passive obedience of Christ, imputed to them, and is the reward of his merit; but if we bear in mind that it was grace which provided a righteousness of infinite value, and which imputes it to us, we cannot wonder to find it declared in scripture, that "in Christ we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of God's grace; that "we are justified freely by grace, through the redemption purchased by Christ, and, being so, are made heirs, according to the hope of eternal life." If we view such as are delivered from the power of indwelling sin, as born again, as turned from darkness to light, and as effectually called, we must, if we believe the authority of God's word, own, that they are indebted for their regeneration, their conversion, and their holy vocation to free and efficacious grace, and sovereign distinguishing mercy. The scriptures of truth have told us, that it is "God the Father, who, according to his abundant mercy, has begot us again to a lively hope, and to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and never fading;" that

ε Eph. v. 7. Rom. iii. 24. Tit. iii. 7.

it is “according to his mercy that he saves us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit;” that “it is through the tender mercies of our God, that the day spring from on high has visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace; that it is God “who has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the foundation of the world, but is since made manifest, by the appearing of Christ in the flesh^f.” If we let our thoughts go on to the consummating of the design of God and Christ, in perfect blessedness being confer’d on those who are justified and sanctified, we must still confess, that they are indebted for the crowns of glory, which they will wear, in the country of light, to abundant mercy and rich grace; for we are assured^g, that grace must reign through righteousness to eternal life; and that this, let it be ever so great a blessing, is the free gift of God: So that whether we consider our salvation as it was decreed by God before time, as it was purchased by Christ, in the fulness of

^f 1 Pet. i. 3. Tit. iii. 5. Luke i. 78, 79. 2 Tim. i. 9, 10.
^g Rom. v. 21. vi. 23.

time, as it is begun in the day of God's power, or as it is compleated when we leave the body, we must own, that it is all of grace, and is the gift of grace.

As God, in saving sinners, designed to glorify his free grace, and to make his undeserved goodness appear in its full beauty, so one great end he had in view was, to promote holiness. All the several parts of salvation are mentioned in scripture, as what should stir us up to abound in holiness and good works: If we are ^h elected by God, it is that we may be holy and blameless before him in love; and if we reap the benefits of electing love, it is through sanctification of the Spirit to obedience: If Christ ⁱ gave himself for us, it was that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify us to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works: If we ^k are ransom'd, not with corruptible things, but with the precious blood of Christ, it is, that we may be deliver'd from a vain conversation, and may pass the time of our sojourning here below in fear: If we are bought ^l with a price, it is that we may look upon our selves to be no longer our own, but may be sensible of the obligations we are under to glorify God in our

^h Eph. i. 4, 5. 2 Theff. ii. 13. ⁱ Pet. i. 2. ^j Tii. ii. 13.

^k 1 Pet. i. 17, 18, 19.

^l 1 Cor. vi. 20.

bodies and spirits, which are his : If we are ^m new formed by God, it is for himself, that we may shew forth his praise : If we are made ⁿ partakers of a spiritual vocation, it is, that as he, who has called us, is holy, we may be holy in all manner of conversation : If we receive the earnest^o of a kingdom that cannot be shook, we must serve God acceptably, and with holy fear : If we are ^p brought to see God in the light of glory, it is not without following after holiness : If we enter ^q within the gates of the heavenly city, and eat of the tree of life, we must be such as do God's commandments, and do not give way to impurity, or love or make a lie.

We find the scripture is far from supposing, that man's being indebted to free grace for all the parts of his salvation, is any encouragement to act licentiously : It asserts, that if man is made partaker of the benefits, which are the fruits of undeserved love, he is by this ^r laid under obligations to be holy, and to abound in good works ; that he may manifest, that he has had imparted to him the gifts of mercy ;

^m *Isai. xliii. 21.*

ⁿ *2 Pet. i. 15.*

^o *Heb. xii. 28.*

^p *Ibid. ver. 14.*

^q *Rev. xxii. 14, 15.*

^r Concerning the obligations which lie upon men to be holy, see Mr. Richard Taylor's excellent discourse of the Necessity of Holiness, at the end of his *Scripture Doctrine of Justification*, p. 234—268. in the second volume of his works.

that

that he may shew his gratitude to the author and giver of the things which relate to his everlasting peace, by living to his praise; and that he may have a meetness to inhabit the pure and incorruptible realms, where he shall see his Redeemer as he is. When men think, that ascribing the salvation of sinners to the free grace of God, has a tendency to loose the bands of duty; it is because they have no right knowledge of the doctrine of grace, and because they talk of what they do not understand. We may take a summary view of those evangelical truths, which are comprehended in what is commoly called the doctrine of man's salvation by grace, in the following six articles.

1. The very notion of salvation includes in it the need the persons have to be saved, who are the subjects of it; for if there had been no transgression, there would have been no need of a restoration; so that if we suppose men are not happy without salvation, we must allow, that, in themselves, they are in a miserable condition. God made man upright, and he came pure out of his Maker's hands; who enter'd into a covenant of works with him, and all his posterity in him, as a common head, promising life, on condition of perfect obedience: This covenant our common father broke, by sinning against God; by

this apostacy, he, and we in him, fell from original righteousness, lost communion with God, and so became dead in sin ; the guilt of the first Adam's sin is imputed to all his posterity, and a corrupt nature is derived to them, whereby they are averse to all good, and prone to all evil. Having fallen from God, it is not possible for us to restore our selves ; for all the good we can do, is previously owing to God, by the law of creation, and so cannot make atonement for what we omit : But, setting this aside, our minds are darken'd, our wills are filled with enmity against God, and our affections run astray from him ; so that when we do what is materially good, we do not act from a principle of love to our supreme Law-giver, we regard not his will, neither do we make his glory our end. The consequence of all this is, that the most High will not manifest his mercy to us, on account of any thing in us, or any thing done by us : We are debtors to his justice, and must fall victims to his anger, unless he is pleased, out of his sovereign free love, to remember us in our low estate, and provide for our recovery, in a way not derogatory to his perfections, and not inconsistent with his maintaining his own honour.

2. God foreknew the fall of man, and knew how to turn it to his own glory; he, in his sovereign pleasure, thought fit not to leave the whole of the human race to perish: A certain determinate number he chose in Christ to salvation, without foresight of good works, as causes moving him hereto, but according to the good pleasure of his will: These he has predestinated, to be conform'd to the image of his Son, that in time they may be holy and blameless before him, and that, at the end of their days, they may be happy with him. For the salvation of his elect, God the Father provided, before the world begun, in entering into a covenant with God the Son, as their Head, and with them in him: This covenant being made between two immutable Persons, is invariable; and the most ample provision is made for the salvation of such as were represented by Christ; seeing their welfare is not made to depend on uncertain conditions to be perform'd by them, but all things are promised freely to be, by grace, wrought in them, in due time, relating to holiness and happiness.

3. Our Lord Jesus Christ, our Surety and Redeemer, in the fulness of time, appear'd in the flesh, and, being God as well as man, offer'd a satisfaction of infinite value to the offended justice of his Father,

by fulfilling the law, and suffering death, for the sins of his people: And all that are justified before God, are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption purchased by Christ. The active and the passive obedience of the Redeemer is imputed to them, as their sole justifying righteousness, and for the sake of this only their sins are forgiven, and their persons are accepted as righteous in the sight of their Judge, and not for the sake of faith, repentance, or sincere obedience. Faith is wrought in their hearts, to receive Christ, and to rest upon him; and as it is employ'd in justification, it only looks to him as a Priest, dying for sin, and attoning for transgression: But, in the full compass of it, it receives him in all his offices, it obeys him as a Prophet, and submits to him as a King; though he delivers from the curse of the law, as a broken covenant of works, yet he never designed to abrogate it, as a rule of life, and to substitute in its room a new remedial law of grace, which, instead of perfect righteousness, requires sincere obedience, as a condition of God's favour.

4. Regeneration is not owing to man's power, will, or abilities, but he is renew'd, or new created, by the power of the Holy Spirit, who enlightens his mind, renews his will, and purifies his affections. This

is a work of grace, and he is altogether passive in it; but the design of this work upon him is, that he may be converted, or render'd active to every good work, and may be sanctified, or live to the praise and glory of God. The Holy Spirit, who is the efficient cause to work all grace in such as are born from above, enables them to repent of their sins, to resist indwelling corruption, and Satan's temptations, to abound in good works, and to practise the duties of mortification and self-denial, with a view not of mens applause, but of advancing God's glory in the world, and from a desire of shewing their gratitude to the Father, who chose them to holiness and salvation; to the Son, who redeem'd them from wrath and a vain conversation; and to the Spirit, who new forms them for himself, that they may shew forth his praise.

5. Such as are sanctified, are not left to carry on, by their own power, the work which they could not begin, but they are enabled, by the Holy Spirit, to hold on their way in the paths of duty: Having continual supplies from him, as a Spirit of grace, they advance from lower to higher degrees of holiness, they go from strength to strength; they fight the good fight of faith, and finish the course of godliness laid out for them: When they depend on

the aids of divine grace, they move not with a heavy pace, and with slow steps, but they go on with freedom and vigour ; forgetting the things that are behind, they reach after the things which are before, and they eagerly follow after holiness ; without which none can see God, by the light of faith, here, for their comfort, or in the light of glory, hereafter, for the consummating their eternal happiness.

6. When true believers have finished their work of faith, and their labour of love, grace, which laid the foundation of their happiness in the decree of election, and in the covenant between the Father and the Son, lays on the top-stone of their salvation in glory. The good Spirit conducts them to the land of uprightness, where no unruly motion will ever disturb the quiet of their breasts, but where, in sinless innocence, they will spend a happy eternity, and, with a perfectly holy frame, will, to everlasting, engage in God's service, without the least inclination to deviate from him.

If we respect our salvation, as order'd by God from eternity, it was by grace, but that we might be holy ; if we consider it as coming to us freely, as the reward of Christ's purchase, it was that we might be conformed to his image, and might act in obedience to him, as his peculiar people ;
it

if we view it as it is applied to us by the Spirit, it is that we may be holy here, though not perfectly holy, and that we may be compleatly holy hereafter, in a better world. Though salvation is by grace, yet holiness is a necessary and essential part of it; and it was never the design of God to manifest his grace, without bringing such as are the subjects of it to bear some resemblance to himself in purity.

Seeing matters stand thus, it is only ignorance of the doctrine of grace, which makes some men charge it with opening a door to licentiousness, or relaxing the obligations to duty, and which makes others draw odious and false consequences from it, to encourage themselves in laziness and immoralities. Did God the Father choose the heirs of glory to holiness, as well as happiness? Did God the Son redeem them, by his precious blood, that they might be zealous of good works? And does God the Holy Spirit renew them, in the whole frame of their minds, that they may walk in the paths of purity, and in the ways of uprightness? And will any, who desire to be made partakers of salvation, venture to run counter to the end the sacred Three had in view, as they took their different parts, in contriving, procuring, and effecting the happiness of such as are rescued from destruction? Are believers chose, re-
deem'd,

deem'd, and renew'd, that they may be holy, though not because they are holy? And can any have the face to say, that holiness, which was designed to be promoted in election, in redemption, and in regeneration, is not absolutely necessary, if it must not be made the cause or condition of salvation? It is only by reason of mens pride and vanity, which put them upon desiring to be their own saviours, that they are so forward to arraign the doctrine of grace, which leaves no room for boasting, as being an unholy doctrine; and it is from mens gross ignorance and aggravated wickedness that they turn it into lasciviousness. God has declared, that the great ends of shewing the riches of free grace, of exalting Christ, and of promoting holiness, may be carried on together; and let him be true, though men, who run into opposite schemes of error, be found liars. Nothing can be more intolerable, than the arrogance of such as bespatter and reproach the doctrine of grace, and nothing can be more detestible, than the impiety of such, as pervert and abuse it.

II. Having in the general, under the former head, vindicated the doctrine of grace, from the charge of promoting licentiousness, I shall now more distinctly shew,

shew, with respect to the several parts of our salvation, that no encouragement is given to negligence or impurity, by their being ascribed to the free grace of God.

It cannot be denied, but that the glorious doctrine of free grace has been abused, by men of wicked principles, and vile practices. Some, before the apostles had finish'd their warfare here on earth, endeavour'd to turn the grace of God into wantonness, who are most severely condemn'd by Peter, in his second epistle, and by Jude, in his epistle, both which were wrote on the same occasion: The former of these ^c has the following expressions; " The Lord knows how to reserve the unjust to the day of judgment, to be punish'd, chiefly them that walk after the flesh, in the lust of uncleanness: They shall perish in their own corruption, and shall receive the reward of unrighteousness: They count it pleasure to riot in the day time; having eyes full of the adulterers, and which cannot cease from sin: To them the mist of darkness is reserved for ever; for when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure, through the lusts of the flesh, those who for a while escaped from them who lived in error; whilst they promise them liberty, they themselves are the ser-

^c 2 Pet. ii. 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 17, 18, 19.

vants of sin." The other ^t inspired writer has given us the reason of his inditing his epistle, in the following words: "It was needful for me to write to you, and to exhort you, to contend earnestly for the faith once deliver'd to the saints; for there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before ordain'd to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness." Before the good apostles had seal'd the truth with their blood, the ^v Gnostics and Nicolaitans had crept in among Christians, before they were aware, who were ungodly pretenders, that were forward to talk of the free grace of God, in great swelling words of vanity; but abused it, by making it a handle for loose practices; for they held, that fornication and adultery were things lawful, and that it was no sin to equivocate, or to conform occasionally to the Heathen ceremonies, and they practised all manner of abominable wickedness. These had their impiety

^t Jude 3, 4.

^v Nicolaitae—indiscrete vivunt—plenissime autem per Joannis apocalypsin manifestantur qui sint, nullam differentiam esse docentes in moechando & Idolothyton edere. Irenaeus, Lib. I. c. 26. p. 105. Ed. Massuet.

If any one is desirous to have a full account of the abominable impieties and horrible lewdness, which the Gnostics and Nicolaitans run into, and practised, he may meet with it in Epiphanius, Haer. 25 & 26.

from Simon Magus ^w, the father of almost all heresies. This impostor, who pretended he

^w Simon Samaritanus Magus ille—docuit semet ipsum esse qui inter Judaeos quidem quasi filius apparuerit, in Samaria autem quasi pater descenderit, in reliquis vero gentibus quasi Spiritus Sanctus adventaverit. Esse autem se sublimissimam virtutem, hoc est, eum, qui sit super omnia Pater, & sustinere vocari quodcunque eum vocant homines. Simon autem Samaritanus ex quo diversae haereses substituerunt habuit hujusmodi sectae materiam. Hic Helenam quandam ipse à Tyro civitate Phoenices quaestuariam cum redemisset, secum circumducebat, dicens, hanc esse primam mentis ejus conceptionem, matrem omnium, per quam initio mente concepit angelos facere & archangelos. Hanc enim Ennoiam exsilientem ex eo cognoscentem quae vult pater ejus, degredi ad inferiora, & generare angelos & potestates à quibus & mundum hunc factum dixit.—Prophetas autem à mundi fabricatoribus angelis inspiratos dixisse prophetias: quapropter nec ulterius curarint illos hi, qui in eum & in Helenam ejus spem habent, & ut liberos agere quae velint: secundum enim ipsius gratiam salvari homines, sed non secundum operas justas. Nec enim esse naturaliter operationes justas, sed ex accidenti; quemadmodum posuerunt qui mundum fecerunt angeli, per hujusmodi praecepta in servitutem deducentes homines. Quapropter & solvi mundum, & liberari eos, qui sunt ejus, ab imperio eorum qui mundum fecerunt, repromisit. Igitur horum mystici sacerdotes libidinose quidem vivunt, magias autem perficiunt, quemadmodum potest unus quisque ipsorum. Exorcismis & incantationibus utuntur. Amatoria quoque & agogima, & qui dicuntur paredri & oniropompi & quaecunque sunt alia perierga apud eos studiose exercentur. Irenaeus, Lib. I. c. 23. p. 99, 100.

The reader may see a larger account of Simon's blasphemies and impieties in Epiphanius, (Haeref. 21.) I shall only add part of Theodorit's account, because it is taken from Irenaeus, whose original text is lost.

Σιμῶν ὁ Σαμαρείτης ὁ μάγος—ἐαυτὸν ἢ ἀπειρον ὠνόμασε δύναμιν, καὶ Ἰουδαίοις μὲν ὡς υἱὸν φανῆναι, πρὸς δὲ Σαμαρείταις ὡς πατέρα καλελυθέναι, ἐν δὲ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἔθνεσιν ὡς πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἐπιποιτῆσαι· καὶ ἑτέραν δὲ τινὰ ἐπὶ τέχνης ἐσῶς, περὶ ταγορῶσιν Ἐλένην, σείνοικον ποιησάμεν.

he was the supreme God, who appear'd differently, as the Father, as the Son, and as the Spirit, in different dispensations, lived in avowed fornication with one Helena, a common prostitute, whom he had bought from the stewes ; and he gave out, that she was the first product of his mind ; that by her he made the angels, who had hitherto usurped the government of the world, and had not behaved well : He asserted, that the authors of the scriptures were inspired by these angels, and consequently that they were not worthy of regard : He therefore allow'd such as believed in him and Helena, to live as they pleased, persuading them not to mind the threatenings of the law, and saying, that salvation was only by grace, and that good works were not necessary, there being no essential difference

μενΘ, ἥ πρώτην αὐτῷ ἔννοιαν ἔρασκεν εἶναι, καὶ μητέρα
 ἧς ἔλων ἀνόμαζε, καὶ δι' αὐτῆς καὶ τὰς ἀγγέλους, καὶ τὰς ἀρ-
 χαγγέλους πεποιηκέναι· ὑπὸ ᾧ ἡ ἀγγέλων διημιερνηθῆ-
 ναι ἡ κόσμον.—Τὰς ὅ περὶ τὰς ἀγγέλων ὑπεργὰς
 γενεῶν· τὰς ὅ εἰς αὐτὸν πισδύοντας ἐκέλευσε μὴ προσέ-
 χειν ἐκείνοις, μὴ ὅ φείτῃεν ἧς νόμων τὰς ἀπειλάς, ἀλλὰ
 πρῶττον ὡς ἐλῶδέρους ἅπερ ἂν ἐδελήσων· ἔγὼ διὰ πρῶ-
 ξων ἀγαθῶν, ἀλλὰ διὰ χάριτος τῶν ἀξίως τ' σωτηρίας·
 ἔδῃ χάριν, οἱ τ' τέτε συμμορίας πᾶς ἐτόλμων ἀσέλγειαν,
 καὶ μάγανείαις ἐχρῶντο παντοδαπαῖς, ἐρωτικά τινα καὶ
 ἀγῶνιμα μηχανώμενοι, καὶ τὰ ἄλλα ὅσα τ' γοντείαις ἰδία
 ὡς θεῶα μετιόντες μυθήσια. Theodorit. Haeretic. fab.
 Lib. I. c. 2. Opp. Vol. IV. p. 192, 193. Edit. Par.

This account of Simon, given us by Irenaeus and Theo-
 dorit, is, of all, the most authentick, and nothing can bet-
 ter illustrate the apostles Peter and Jude.

between

between the things commanded in the Old Testament, and the matters there prohibited : Thus, by promising men liberty, he made them the servants of sin ; for his followers run into all manner of impurity. We see, that the abusing the doctrine of grace, was one of the abominations of the first heretick that infested the church, after the appearance of our Saviour in the flesh ; his corrupt tenets, as to this, were embraced by all the several sects, which took the proud, vain-glorious title of Gnostics, or enlighten'd persons, men of deep knowledge, and which prevail'd very much in the second century. This wicked abuse of a most holy doctrine, is what was not confined to those early ages ; the churches of Christ have been often pester'd with a generation of vipers, who are for turning the grace of God into wantonness. When the devil has not been able to run down this comfortable doctrine, by open opposition, he has employ'd his * missiona-

* Such were John Matthias, the pretended prophet, and baker of Haerlem ; John Bokelsen, a taylor of Leyden ; Knipperdolling, Kippenbrochen, Tuiscofschurier, Chrechtlingen, and the rest of the Enthusiasts, who made the disturbance at Munster, a little after the reformation. Such were those who called themselves, The Family of Love ; and such were some, who, in our country, a few years ago, went under the name of Philadelphians, who are now, in a manner, come to nothing.

ries to disgrace it, by drawing odious consequences from it. Some impure persons can talk much of free grace; nay, they may affect to be more zealous for the love of God in election, than many who have felt the blessed effects of it, and may scarce be able to bear to hear of any other truth: These, tho' they may speak great swelling words, about free, rich, sovereign grace, yet they have no part or portion in it, but are in the gall of bitterness, and under the bond of iniquity, as well as Simon, the first founder of their impiety. They are really enemies to Christ, and they wound him in the house of his friends; and, unless they are brought to repentance, and to the acknowledgment of the truth, their condemnation will be more severe than that of ignorant creatures, who knew none of the truths of the gospel.

There have been some who, by their life and conversation, have shew'd, that they were far from being enemies to holiness, who have amused themselves with fancies about God's loving and delighting in his elect, while they were in a state of nature, of his seeing no sin in his people, and of good works not being necessary to salvation, and who have been forward to condemn pressing men to duty, as legal preaching, and to speak of exhorting to
repen-

repentance, mortification, and self-denial, as low and mean stuff. Far be it from us to charge some who have gone into this way of thinking and talking, with turning the grace of God into wantonness; however, as we can state the doctrine we vindicate from the charge of Antinomianism, so as to keep it entirely clear of attributing too much to the will of men, without admitting these positions, which have great difficulties attending them, we certainly are at liberty to do it: And as we would not take into our notion of it what we think easy to be perverted, we desire not to have the opinions of others, which are not embraced by the generality of the pleaders for free grace, attributed to us.

If we allow the scripture to be given by divine inspiration, we must own, matters are express'd there in the justest way; and we shall find it safe to speak according to it, if we are not guilty of the intolerable folly, which most erring men run into, of setting one imperfect sentence in opposition to the whole tenor of divine revelation, or the analogy of faith. As to the case before us, we have a noble account given us, by the apostle Paul, of the tendency of the doctrine of grace, to promote piety, honesty, and temperance, in the

following words^v, which are worthy of the Holy Spirit, who dictated them to him: “ The grace of God, which brings salvation, has appear’d to all men, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we live soberly, righteously, and piously in this present world; expecting the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and might purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous for good works.” This is an excellent account of the true doctrine, which the ministers of the gospel are to preach; and therefore it is no wonder, that the inspired instructor added, to this declaration, the following charge to Titus, his own son, after the common faith: “ These things speak, exhort, and rebuke with all authority; let no man despise thee.” We are to shew men their duty, to reprove them for their sins, and to exhort them to follow after holiness; that they may adorn the gospel of God, and we must not be daunted, if we are called legal preachers, and retailers of duties: We are likewise to stand up for the freeness, the riches, and the abundance of divine grace, and must not be intimi-

^v Tit. ii. 11—14.

dated, in defending that doctrine which attributes mens salvation to the mercy of God, and the purchase of Christ, by the senseless clamour raised against us by a generation of formal Pharisees, as if we promoted licentiousness.

If men would think coolly, and argue rationally, there would be little need of any thing more than fairly stating the doctrine of grace, in order to vindicate it from the charge of Antinomianism, or to shew that it has no tendency to promote licentiousness: But as men, while they are in a state of unregeneracy, are swell'd with spiritual pride, and puff'd up with high and vain conceits of their own performances, they cannot bear the thoughts of being wholly indebted to free grace for their salvation, and therefore they hate the doctrine, because it supposes them not to be so considerable in the eyes of God, as they imagine they should be, and so stains the pride of their glory: And as they hate it, it is no wonder that they oppose and malign it, and set it off in the most odious colours, as if it did not include the necessity of that holiness of heart and life, which they are not really and sincerely affected to; though, to serve a turn, and to throw a mist before the eyes of the unwary, they would seem noisy advocates for it. No charge can be really more un-

just, than what furious Legalists bring against the evangelical doctrine of free grace, which will, in some measure, appear, if the following particulars are carefully weigh'd.

1. The doctrine of free and absolute election no ways weakens the obligations we lie under to follow after holiness, because it is aver'd, by all who know any thing of the scripture account of this glorious and comfortable doctrine, that tho' election ^z is free and sovereign, absolute and unconditional, though men are not elected to happiness, because God foresaw they would be holy, yet ^a he chose them to holiness. Election does not dissolve the obligation men lie under to God, as creatures: As they are form'd by him out of nothing, as they are supported by his providential care, and are supplied by his bounty, and as in his hand are all their ways, they, by the law of creation, are obliged to love him, to obey his will, and, in all their natural, moral, and religious actions, to aim at the advancement of his glory, as their chief and ultimate end. A person must have a head very oddly turn'd, that can bring himself, on calm reflection,

^z See especially the learned Mr. Ridgley's *Body of Divinity*, Vol. I. p. 236. col. 2.—240. col. 1.

^a See the same useful Work, p. 227. col. 2.—231. col. 2.

to think, that all these obligations, which lie upon a man, as he is a creature, are either cancel'd or weaken'd, by God's having had thoughts of peace towards him, before the foundation of the world: It is strange arguing, that God's kind intentions to him loose the bands of duty, or break the relation wherein he stands to his Maker and Law-giver, as his subject. Nay, if we could suppose that a man, in a state of nature, could get any positive proof that he is the elect of God, which by the way is impossible; yet could it be so, this would be so far from striking out his debt of obedience, that it would add to it a debt of love and gratitude. Surely, no one can say, that if a man could have the surest evidence of his being elected by God, he has liberty to return to him hatred for love, and contempt for kindness. Certainly, an all-wise being cannot be thought to throw away favours on men, which would be the case, if they were more at liberty to cast contempt on his law, and to repeat acts of rebellion against him, by reason of his having pre-ordained their happiness.

If we consult the oracles of truth, we shall find, that the purpose of God, in electing persons, and in predestinating them to life, was, that they might be holy, and there will be no need to multiply passages,

tending to prove this, if we carefully consider the following noble rapture, which the apostle Paul, inspired with holy joy, utter'd, in the beginning of his epistle to the saints at Ephesus ^b: “ Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly things, in Christ, according as he has chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love, having predestinated us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace ; by which he has made us accepted in the beloved, in whom we have redemption thro’ his blood, and the forgiveness of sins,—in whom also we have obtain’d an inheritance, being predestinated, according to the purpose of him, who works all things according to the counsel of his will, that we should be to the praise of his glory, who have trusted in Christ.” Nothing can be more express than this admirable passage, to prove the absolute freeness of election and predestination ; it is expressly asserted, that we are chose by God in Christ, and predestinated to the adoption of children, according to the good pleasure of

^b Eph. i. 3—7, 11, 13.

his will ; nay, his sovereign pleasure ; for it is according to the counsel of him that works all things, or certainly and infallibly brings all things about, after the purpose of his will : We are chose in Christ, and are preordain'd to the privilege of a change of state by adoption, which is merited and purchased for us by Christ : Now the end of God, in choosing us, and predestinating us to the grace of adoption, was, that we might be holy and without blame before him in love, and that we might be to the praise and the glory of his grace : The end of God's choosing us was, that we might be holy ; and does his act in electing us, give us a liberty to frustrate, as far as in us lies, the end of his choice ? Certainly every one, who would shew himself to be the elect of God, ought to comply with the end, which he had in view, in choosing him to honour, glory, and immortality. What God has joined together, let not vain man pretend to separate ; and, indeed, it will never be separated, by those who are really the subjects of electing love ; otherwise we must allow, that God has purposed something in vain, which is a thought too shocking and blasphemous to be admitted, concerning a being of infinite wisdom and power. Our obligation to holiness is not weaken'd, but strengthen'd, by considering, that those

whom God, out of his sovereign pleasure, chose and ordain'd to life, he also design'd should be holy. Accordingly it is matter of fact, that the generality of such as have embraced the doctrine of absolute election, have been most exemplary in their walk, being sensible that they ought to comply with the end of God, as well as enjoy the privileges he has laid out for them; whereas too many of those, who would be for tying God's choice to their foreseen faith and good works, as conditions moving him thereto, take care, by their want of faith, and neglect of good works, to shew, that they either are not of the number of God's elect, or have not yet felt the blessed effects of it. A frothy temper of mind, with respect to things sacred, and an unwary conversation, have too commonly been the scandalous badges of such, as must needs have it that they are chose by God, for foreseen faith and holiness, and have been the most eager to prate against the true scripture doctrine of absolute election, with lying and malicious words, by representing it as calculated to promote looseness of life.

It must, indeed, be own'd, that some profane sinners have abused this doctrine, and have broke in upon the connection that there is between the initial parts, and the sure marks of salvation in this life,
and

and the completion of it in the life of glory : But, whatever unruly sinners may imagine, the end will never be bestowed, where the means, appointed to bring about that end, nay, which are the beginning of what is to be brought to an end, are entirely thrown aside. Therefore it is mererant for a hair-brain'd sinner to say, If I am elected to salvation, I shall be saved, let me live as I list ; if I am a chosen vessel, sin shall not hinder my happiness : This is nothing but rumbling talk ; it is no better sense than if a man should say, If I am elected, I shall be saved, though I should never be brought into a state of salvation ; or, I shall be saved, without salvation ; only in this last way of speaking, the nonsense is so apparent, that it strikes even upon the most dull apprehension. Supposing a man was to break a limb, and should refuse to have it set, and was gravely to argue, that his times are in God's hand, and that if it is determined, he shall live without being lame, it shall certainly be so with him, though he uses no means ; or supposing a man was to be ready to famish for hunger, and was burnt up with thirst, if he should say, that if he is to live strong, and in health, he assuredly will, whether he takes sustenance or no ; supposing such cases, should we not reckon persons, who thus chatter, to be directly

directly mad, or to be mere ideots? Certainly we should, when yet they speak only with reference to the comfort of this life. Surely then it is worse than mad, because the matter is of vastly greater importance, than the ease of this natural life, for any to pretend, that as eternal life is the gift of electing love, it can be obtain'd without the use of the means which God has determined should be used, and without the grace he actually works, in all that he saves. Without holiness, there is no proof of election, therefore absolute election does not lessen our regards to holiness. If persons say they are elected, let them prove they are partakers of the blessings which result from the grace of election by a holy life; for all that are chose by God to salvation, are sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Whoever draws this absurd consequence, that if he is elected, he shall be saved, though he does as he will, gives the greatest ground to suspect that he never experienced the love of God; and if he belongs to the election of grace, when he is actually gather'd in, he will have very different thoughts, and will be filled with shame and humiliation, for having done any thing to disgrace such a holy doctrine.

If we will not presumptuously deny what is laid down in the oracles of truth, we must be as strenuous to maintain, that God

chose his people to holiness, as we should be to stand up for the notion of election being only from his sovereign grace ; and then, as we shall not make the purpose of the unchangeable God depend on the mutable will of frail men, so we shall never weaken the obligations we are under to be holy, by maintaining absolute election. We are, in compliance to God's end, to practise holiness ; and so we have a farther obligation added, to that which lies upon us as creatures, to do whatever is by any means made known to us, to be the will of our Maker and kind Preserver. The far greater number of those who have declared their faith, with relation to the great doctrine of particular and absolute election, have sufficiently guarded against all abuse of it ; yet it has always been vilified by such as do not care to be wholly indebted to God for salvation ; nothing can be more unrighteous than their charge against us ; and their injustice is the more highly aggravated, because they either know, or might know, that it is entirely groundless. Whether they are so wicked, as knowingly and maliciously to misrepresent our tenets, or whether they are so foolish as to speak evil of our principles, without understanding them, is hard to determine.

2. The doctrine of free justification, by the righteousness of Christ, imputed and
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received by faith, does not tend to promote licentiousness ; because all who look to him as a priest, dying for sin, and trust in his merit for acceptance with God, receive him in all his offices, and so obey him as a prophet, and submit to him as a king.

Sinners can never appease the anger of God, by what they can perform ; because all their duties are what they owe to God, as they are his creatures ; and so the being found in them, is no more than paying a just debt, and cannot atone for the omission of what they are obliged to do. It was great goodness in God, when sinners could not answer for themselves, to appoint a Saviour to undertake for them, who, by fulfilling the precept of the law, and suffering the penalty which it inflicted, in case of disobedience, could atone for sin, or make propitiation for guilt, satisfy justice, appease the divine anger, magnify the law, and make it honourable, and **bring** in an everlasting righteousness, of **infinite** value ; which might not only free from condemnation, but might give a right and title to the glory of heaven : And it is rich grace in God, to impute the righteousness of a Redeemer to us, that we may stand before him without shame and blushing. There can nothing be justly deduced from this, that can weaken the obli-

obligations men are under, to obey the law ; certainly they are not exempted from observing it, as a rule of life, because they are delivered from the curse of it, as a broken covenant of works.

Justification in the sight of God, is for the sake of Christ's active and passive obedience, imputed to a sinner, and received by faith ; which is not from himself, but is the gift of God, and is bestow'd upon him, and wrought in his heart, whenever the merit of the Redeemer is applied to him. Faith, which is created in the soul of every one, who is brought to live in Christ, and to be under him, as a head of righteousness, as it is made use of, by the holy Spirit, in justification, is wholly and only employ'd, in looking to Christ as a priest, dying for sin, and in trusting in the merit of his sacrifice, and which he offer'd up : It looks to Christ as satisfying justice, answering the demands of the law, as a covenant of works, and suffering death : It regards him as the only priest, deputed and appointed by God, to save sinners, and as the only one who can carry away sin, and can appease God, by bearing the weight of infinite wrath ; it respects Christ as an infinite person, one of almighty power, to go through what he undertook, and of boundless merit, to procure everlasting happiness ; it beholds him in his bloody death,

death, and in his exquisite sufferings, as enduring the utmost shame, and the most acute pain, in his body, and as suffering inexpressible torments in his soul ; it flies to him for refuge, from the tempest of divine indignation ; it receives him as the only Saviour ; and it rests and relies upon him, for the free and full forgiveness of sin, for deliverance from condemnation, for justification before God, and acceptance in his sight, and for a right and title to the favour of the Most High, and to eternal life. This is the work of faith, as it is employ'd in justification ; but the enemies of this doctrine know well enough, that they who are advocates for the infinite merit of Christ, being the sole cause of a sinner's deliverance from misery, and his being found by God, in peace, maintain, that though faith, as it is used in justification, is only employ'd in looking to, and trusting in Christ as a priest, dying for sin ; yet, with different views, it receives Christ in his other offices ; it receives him as a prophet ; for it assents to the truth of all the glorious doctrines which he has revealed ; and it relies on him for spiritual illumination, to know more of God's will, about the duties which are to be perform'd by all who profess him ; it likewise receives him as a king ; for it submits to his authority, and obeys his commands,

mands, it follows him as he is the Captain of salvation, and it chooses him as a Sovereign, to rule in the heart, to subdue lust, and to rout the armies of indwelling corruption. Faith relies on Christ as a Priest, for justification and acceptance with God; but though this is one prime part of its work, yet this does not take in the whole notion of that grace; it depends upon Christ as the great Prophet, who can make wise to salvation, and can lead his people into the knowledge of all truth, and can impress their hearts with a lively belief of what he is pleased to discover; and it trusts in him, as an exalted Saviour and a King, for strength, to be steadfast in the belief of the great truths reveal'd in scripture, and to be zealous in the defence of them, for power to practise holiness, to proceed in the paths of piety, to renew repentance, and to engage in the great duties of mortification and self-denial, and for might, to struggle against indwelling sin, to overcome the alluring temptations and the evils of the world, and to maintain a continued conflict against the powers of darkness. Though faith, as made use of in justification, does not do all this, yet this is the faith which is wrought in the hearts of all who are justified freely by grace, through the redemption purchased by Christ; and will any be so hardy, or so foolish, as to say,

say, that this promotes licentiousness? Far otherwise; it brings a man to submit to Christ's institutions, and to rely on him for aid to perform them better than he can by his own power.

It was the design of Christ to take away the curse of the law, as it is a broken covenant of works, by becoming a curse for us, and by bearing, in our stead, all that punishment which the law denounced against us; but it never was his purpose to abrogate the law, as it is a rule of life; rather to bring us to be more conformable to it, as it is a transcript of the holiness of God. Seeing the case is thus, we may take up the words^c of the apostle Paul, and may say after him; "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid; we rather establish the law." Though we ascribe justification to the righteousness of Christ, yet we leave to the law all the honour that belongs to it, as a rule of life: We own^d, that "we are not without law to God, but that we are under the law to Christ." When we trust in Christ as a Surety, we look upon our selves as under the highest obligation to obey him as our Sovereign; and when he reigns over us a King, he gives us strength for obedience, and sends us to the

^c Rom. iii. 31.

^d 1 Cor. ix. 21.

law, as the rule of our conversation. We start at the thought of saying, as some do, that the law is of no use to believers, for it is of use, as a rule; and we dare not say, with others, that the moral law is repeal'd, and that God has placed the gospel in its room; as a new remedial law of grace, requiring faith, repentance, and sincere obedience, in the room of perfect righteousness; we cannot be pleased with such hideous and blemishing fictions concerning God, as represent him as abrogating a law that was perfect, and framing another instead of it, that admits of imperfect, tho' sincere obedience, as a condition of justification. Far, very far, be such thoughts from us, which reproach the faithfulness, holiness, and wisdom of God: One end he had in saving us by Christ was, to magnify his law, and make it honourable; and if we are of those who are saved by Christ, we shall desire to comply with God, in this, as well as in all his other designs.

If any have been so silly as to attempt to advance faith, by disparaging good works, they are to answer for their profaneness and folly: The gospel account of faith gives no encouragement for any to do so. The scripture supposes, that good works are as necessary to justify and shew the sincerity of our faith before men, as faith in the righteousness of Christ is necessary, in our

justification before God. Hence the apostle James said, "Faith without works is dead, being alone; a man may say, thou hast faith, and I have works; shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works: Thou believest that there is one God, thou dost well, the devils believe and tremble; but wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead ^c." If a man omits to perform those duties, which he owes to God and his neighbour, under the pretence of being justified by faith alone, he shews, that he has no more than a very imperfect notion of faith in Christ, and that what he does know of it, he perverts from its true design; unless a man evidences the sincerity of his faith by his works, all his faith is no more than that traditional historical faith, which is in the devils; and all the great things he says of it, are no more, as to himself, than mere sounds, and a bare noise. Though we are not justified by the works of the law, we must shew the sincerity of our trust in the merit of that sacrifice, which Christ offer'd up for us, as the great High Priest of our profession, by our submitting to his righteous scepter, as our King, and by our taking the law for the rule of our lives and actions. If so,

^c James ii. 17—20.

the doctrine of justification, by the imputed righteousness of Christ, without works, does not suppose good works needless; seeing they are absolutely necessary, as evidences, though not as conditions of justification.

3. The evangelical doctrines of believers being renew'd by the efficacious power and grace of the Holy Spirit, of their being kept by Christ from falling, and enabled by him to persevere to the end, and of their being favoured sometimes with the assurance of the love of God, do not lead to licentiousness; because, in the very nature of the things, it is supposed that they are new created to holiness, that they are enabled, by strength received by Christ, to go on in the paths of godliness, and that without holiness they cannot see the Lord, either by the light of faith here, for their comfort, or in the light of glory hereafter for their exceeding joy.

If we will believe Christ, the true and faithful Witness, sinners must be born again before they can be admitted into the presence of God, in the world of peace and rest: He thus positively declared to Nicodemus^f; "I solemnly assure thee, except a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God; except a man is born

^f John iii. 3, 5.

of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Regeneration is a real change, wrought by the power of the Holy Spirit, in all the faculties of the soul, from sin to holiness, from practising according to the dictates of corrupt nature, to act out of a principle of faith and love to God, and from gratifying the will of the flesh, to pursue after the advancement of God's glory. It may be said to differ ^s from conversion ; the new birth is a spiritual

^s I do not know any writer who has better stated this matter, than that great and judicious divine, Mr. Charnock : Him I have chose to follow, taking a liberty to use some of his expressions. His own words I shall here give, (See his Works, Vol. II. p. 70, 71, 72. first Edition.

Regeneration differs from conversion : Regeneration is a spiritual change, conversion is a spiritual motion : In regeneration there is a power confer'd ; conversion is the exercise of this power : In regeneration there is given us a principle to turn, conversion is our actual turning ; that is, the principle whereby we are brought out of a state of nature, into a state of grace and conversion, the actual fixing on God, as the terminus ad quem : one gives posse agere ; and the other, actu agere.

1. Conversion is related to regeneration, as the effect to the cause: Life precedes motion, and is the cause of motion. In the covenant, the new heart, the new spirit, and God's putting his Spirit into them, is distinguished from their walking in his statutes, (Ezek. xxxvi. 27.) from the first step we take in the way of God, and is set down as the cause of our motion ; " I will cause you to walk in my statutes." In renewing us, God gives us a power ; in converting us, he excites that power. Men are naturally dead, and have a stone upon them ; regeneration is a rolling away the stone from the heart, and a raising to newness of life ; and then conversion is as natural to a regenerate man, as motion is to a living body : A principle of activity will produce action.

2. In

spiritual change ; in it there is a power to act spiritually confer'd, and a principle to turn from sin infused : Conversion is a spiritual motion, it is the exercise of, or putting into act the power received, and it is our actual turning. Conversion is the effect of the Spirit's new creation work, for life precedes motion, and is the cause of it. All men, by nature, lie buried in the grave of sin ; when they are regenerated, the stone is rolled away from the graves mouth, and they are by the almighty, and consequently irresistible, power of

2. In regeneration, man is wholly passive ; in conversion, he is active : As a child, in its first formation in the womb, contributes nothing to the first infusion of life, but after it has life, it is active, and its motion natural. The first reviving of us is wholly the act of God, without any concurrence of the creature ; but after we are revived, we actively and voluntarily live in his sight : " He will revive us, he will raise us up, and then we shall live in his sight ;" then we shall walk before him, and then " we shall follow on to know the Lord," (Hos. vi. 2.) Regeneration is the motion of God in the creature ; conversion is the motion of the creature to God, by virtue of that first principle : From this principle, all the acts of believing, repenting, mortifying, quickening, spring : In all these, a man is active ; in the other, he is utterly passive ; all these are the acts of the will, by the assisting grace of God, after the infusion of the first grace : Conversion is a giving our selves to the Lord ; giving our own selves to the Lord, is a voluntary act, but the power whereby we are enabled thus to give our selves, is wholly and purely, in every part of it, from the Lord himself. A renewed man is said to be led by the Spirit, (Rom. viii. 14.) not drag'd, not forced : The putting a bias and aptitude in the will, is the work of the Spirit quickening it ; but the moving the will to God, by the strength of this bias, is voluntary,

of the Spirit raised to newness of life ; and when they are made alive, conversion is as natural to them, as motion is to a living body. In regeneration, man is entirely passive ; in conversion, he is made active. The day of the new birth, is the time of the Spirit's power being exerted on men, to make them willing to turn from sin to holiness ; and therefore, though, in conversion, the renewed soul is active, yet this is not from its natural power, but from a supernatural power put forth in it, and upon it : This power of acting is not a

luntary, and the act of the creature.—The day of regeneration is solely the day of God's power, wherein he makes men willing to turn to him, (Psal. cx. 3.) So that though, in actual conversion, the creature is active, it is not from the power of man, though it is from a power in man ; not growing up from the impotent root of nature, but settled there by the Spirit of God.

Regeneration differs from sanctification ; habitual sanctification, indeed, is the same thing with this new creature, as habitual rectitude was the spiritual life of Adam ; but actual sanctification, and the gradual progress of it, grows from this principle as a root. Faith purifies the heart, (Acts xv. 9. "purifying their hearts by faith,") and is the cause of this gradual sanctification ; but faith is part of this new creature, and that which is a part, cannot be the cause of the whole, for then it would be the cause of it self. We are not regenerated by faith, though we are sanctified by faith ; but we are new created by the Spirit of God, infusing faith into us. Faith produces the acts of grace, but not the habit of grace, because it is of it self a part of this habit ; for all graces are but one in the habit or new creature ; charity, and likewise every other grace, is but the bubbling up of a pure heart, and a good conscience. Regeneration seems to be the life of this gradual sanctification, the health and liveliness of the soul.

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plant in nature's garden, neither does it spring from the impotent root of the carnal will, but it is planted in the soul by the Spirit's hand, and is settled in the will, by him whose office it is, to renew the elect of God. Regeneration likewise differs from sanctification ; not, indeed, from it, as it may be said to be habitual, but as it may be stiled actual sanctification ; for that consider'd as gradually progressive, grows from the new birth, as its root.

If we duly weigh this account of the work of grace in the soul of man, we shall see no reason to think that man is left at liberty to fulfil the will of the flesh, because he is new form'd by the irresistible power of the Holy Spirit. He must be said to be passive in the new birth, but what does this great change pass upon him for ? That he may be active, and shew that he is raised from a death in sin, by his living a life of holiness. It would be very irrational, and what would be hiss'd at, if any were to suggest, that a child's not contributing to his living, but being wholly indebted to God's creating power for it, is a let to his performing the functions of natural life ; and it is full as ridiculous to say, that a sinner's doing nothing towards new forming himself, but owing his new birth to the Holy Spirit's efficiency, is an impediment to his putting

forth the subsequent acts of the spiritual life.

If any should be so weak as to say, that being new created and regenerated by the Spirit's efficacious operations, being turn'd by his almighty power from darkness to light, and from sin to holiness, and, being sanctified by him, has a tendency to check persons in making a progress in the Christian course, it must be own'd to be a mere folly to go about to argue with, and answer such a person. If any make this doctrine a handle to be lazy and indolent, in the performance of what is good, it is a sign that they pretend to what they know nothing of. Our spiritual life is from the quickening power of the Holy Ghost, and is not from our own wills; but then we should consider, that we are not raised from a death in sin, that we may remain unactive, and we are not made alive to righteousness, that we may indulge idleness: The Spirit enlightens our minds, renews our wills, and purifies our affections; not that we may be slothful and negligent, but that we may be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. The apostle Paul's advice was this^h: "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, and be not conformed to this

^h Rom. xii. 1, 2, 9, 10, 11.

world, but be transformed, by the renewing of your mind, that you may know what is the good, the acceptable, and the perfect will of God. Abhor what is evil, cleave to what is good ; be not slothful in your work, but be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." The grace of the Holy Spirit, by which we are regenerated, we say is efficacious, irresistible, and not to be frustrated : Now can it be thought that this grace is bestow'd, that we may continue unactive, as to what is good ? This would be to suppose it efficacious, without accomplishing its design, irresistible, and yet defeated, not to be frustrated, and yet to be in vain. We are, by nature, in the dark grave of corruption, and we can no more raise our selves, and bring our selves into the light, than a carcase, which has lien long in the dormitories of the earth, can throw off the clods which are heap'd up over it, or unlock the door of the vault that contains it ; and we are dead in trespasses and sins, and can no more put forth the acts of a new life, than the shatter'd parts of a body reduced to dust, can reunite and regain an union with the immortal soul. It is the Spirit, who, when we lie buried in corruption, and are dead in sins, quickens us, and effectually says, Arise, awake, come forth, and shine, for Christ will give you life ; and his end in
doing

doing this is, that we may walk as children of the light, and may act wisely and circumspectly. The apostolick ⁱ doctrine was as follows: "You were sometimes darkness, but now are you light in the Lord; walk as children of the light, for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth, and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness: It is said, Wake thou that sleepest, and rise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee life: See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as those who are wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil." It is the Spirit's design in giving us life, that we may shew we are alive, by acting with diligence, caution, wisdom, and circumspection, in avoiding all things, which are of a sinful and mean nature, and by pursuing after those things, which are good and commendable; so that the doctrine of our regeneration and conversion being owing to his efficacious and irresistible grace, can never countenance laziness or looseness.

We grow in grace, and persevere by virtue of strength derived from Christ. He who was truth it self, declared, that without his aid, we can never proceed, when

ⁱ Eph. v. 7, 8, 9, 11, 14, 15, 16.

he ^k said to his disciples; " You cannot bear fruit, unless you abide in me : I am the vine, you are the branches ; he that abides in me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit, for without me you can do nothing." We can do nothing which is good, unless we derive strength from Christ, by virtue of our union with him ; but it would be odd, if it was to follow, that we must do nothing, because we are in Christ, and are upheld and nourished by him. We must wait on Christ, or trust in him for persevering vigour, and, if we expect aid from him, we must be in a watchful posture ; then it will be with us, according to what is promised to such as rely on Christ, in Isaiah's ¹ prophecy ; " The youths shall faint, and be weary, and the vigorous young men shall utterly fail : But such as wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength ; they shall mount up with the wings of eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." Such as depend on their own strength, shall soon faint, and tire, and die, if they are left to themselves ; but such as wait upon Christ, such as rely upon his power, will renew their strength : When they do this, it is not that they may lie down, and sleep by the way, but that they may be

^k John xv. 4, 5.¹ Isai. xl. 30, 31.

active and industrious in duty, that they may mount up towards heaven, with a towering sprightly motion ; such as is that of the lively eagle, when scorning the ground, she soars aloft ; that they may run in the paths of duty, which are truly the paths of honour, without being weary, or being obliged to drop, for want of spirits ; and that they may refresh themselves with continued walks within the sacred inclosures of pure religion, where are the most refined pleasures, without being faint, or being forced to sit down tired, without a prospect of being able to recruit their vigour. If we are once ingrafted into Christ, we shall go on in his strength, in the way of holiness, and we shall be kept by his power, so that we shall never totally or finally fall from grace ; of this he himself assured us, when he said ^m, “ My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.” This does not excuse us from keeping up a constant watch against the motions of indwelling corruption, and the temptations of the infernal powers ; for if we lay aside our guard, we may fall into sin, and so provoke our beloved and our

^m John x. 27, 28.

friend, to withdraw himself and be gone, and then our feet will stumble on the dark mountains of desponding thoughts, and distrustful fears. The sure encouragement we have to hope that we shall be kept by the power of Christ, through faith, to complete salvation, is far from giving a license to carelessness and indolence; we may, indeed, wickedly make it a handle for these, but then, if we belong to God, we expose our selves to the smart of his fatherly rebukes. Trust in Christ's power, is a grace of an active nature, and, if we go on in his strength, it must be in a way of holiness; therefore a lively faith, instead of making us lazy, will put us upon ⁿ being stedfast, immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, and the more, because we know that our labour of love shall never be in vain in the Lord.

If they who trust in Christ for righteousness and life, are favoured by the Holy Spirit with an assurance of their having a share in the love of the Redeemer, this has a tendency to make them more fervent and active in true obedience, and so does not promote licentiousness. Assurance of salvation is a deep sense and a lively taste of the divine love, join'd with a firm persua-

ⁿ 1 Cor. xv. 58.

sion of Christ's good will to us, whereby we are enabled to look back on what we are by grace, and to see that God is our Father, that Christ is our Redeemer, and that he will save us with an everlasting salvation: This presupposes faith, and cannot be without it, but it is not essential to true faith at all times, but is bestow'd in a way of sovereignty. Assurance is from the Holy Spirit, and, in giving it to a Christian, he affords him a true insight into the treasures of the grace of God, and the love of Christ; he enables a child of God to plead his adoption, with a filial confidence; for we are ^o told, in scripture, that "because we are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, enabling us to cry, Abba, Father:" He witnesses with the spirit of a saint; for we are ^p inform'd, that "the Spirit himself bears witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God;" and he seals up to a believer his interest in the love of God, and is the earnest of the heavenly inheritance; for it is ^q declared, in the word of truth, that by the Holy Spirit, who is the earnest of our inheritance, we are sealed to the day of redemption. The assurance of salvation, which is from the witnessing and

^o Gal. iv. 6. ^p Rom. viii. 16. ^q 2 Cor. i. 13,
14, 22. Eph. iv. 30. 2 Cor. v. 5.

sealing of the Spirit, makes us more holy : It cannot be thought, that he who is infinitely pure, will, or can encourage looseness ; where he takes up his abode, there must be much faith and love, humility and fear, self-denial and uprightness, holiness and purity, circumspection and watchfulness. Such therefore as boast of assurance, and yet can take their swing in sin, are only vain and impudent pretenders. Assurance sets the Christians' graces in a clear light, and checks every thing contrary to God ; and as it is the earnest of heaven, it will make all who are blest'd with it more heavenly, and consequently more holy. When it is thus with believers, fervour and vehemence, zeal and courage, love and patience, will fill their breasts, and, inspired with heavenly vigour, they will pass on from strength to strength, till they set their feet on the eternal hills, where they shall know faintness and weariness no more. The scripture has sufficiently guarded us against abusing the gospel doctrine of assurance. The apostle Paul has shew'd us, what improvement we ought to make of assurance of God's love, in ^r the following passages: " Knowing the season, that now it is high time for us to wake out of sleep ; for now is our salvation nearer, than when

^r Rom. xiii. 11, 14. Eph. iv. 29—32. 1 Cor. xv. 58.

we believed : The night is far spent, the day is at hand ; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light ; let us walk decently as in the day, not in revels and carousals, not in sleep and wantonness, not in strife and envying ; but put you on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no carnal provision for lusts : Let no corrupt word come out of your mouth, but what is good, to edify profitably, that it may minister grace to the hearers ; and grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you are sealed to the day of redemption ; let all bitterness and wrath, and anger and clamour, and evil speaking, with all malice, be thrust from you ; and be you gentle one to another, tender hearted, and ready to do acts of kindness, as God in Christ has been gracious to you. Be stedfast, immoveable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord, seeing you know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." The great apostle John, when he had spoke of the hope and assurance which believers have, that when they come to be for ever with the Lord, they shall possess joys ineffably great, and pleasures, which, in this state of imperfection, they cannot fully know, infer'd, that they should purify themselves, as Christ is pure, or that they should strive to be as like their glorified Head, as is possible,

possible, before they put off the body of sin and death: His ^t words are, “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be; but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is; and every man that has this hope in him, purifies himself, even as he is pure.” We must judge of the tendency of assurance of God’s love by what the apostles of our Lord have said concerning it, who had large degrees of it; they declared, that it is a motive to holiness: If any then prate about their assurance, who are presumptuous sinners, we must look upon them to be either frontless liars, or else wild giddy-headed creatures, who take the freaks of enthusiasm to be the Holy Spirit’s motions.

4. Eternal blessedness, or the heavenly glory, is the gift of grace, and the reward of Christ’s death, and is not owing to our good works, either in the whole, or in part; but this does not tend to promote licentiousness, because without holiness we can never ^t see the Lord, or have a meetness and fitness for heaven.

^t 1 John iii. 2, 3.

^t The reader may see most of the topics, which are briefly mentioned under this head, largely insisted on, by the excellent Mr. Charnock, on the Necessity of Regeneration, p. 36—44. in the second volume of his works.

The scripture has required us to follow after holiness, and has positively declared, that without it we can never see the Lord. The apostle Paul's injunction ^v is this: "Follow holiness, without which none can see the Lord." Indeed, all wicked men will see God in one sense; but how will it be? They will see him in the glittering armour of his justice, in the power of his anger, in the consuming fire of his indignation, exalted on a terrible judgment-seat, to pass sentence upon them, cloathed with thunder, and wielding a sword of vengeance, to cut them in pieces: This will be a sad sight of him. All unholy persons shall see God, but not so as to enjoy any good by him; a cloud of thick darkness, never to be removed, shall for ever interpose between them, and all that is pleasing and delightful in God, and they shall see nothing of him, but what will be matter of the greatest terror to them.

Without holiness, no one can have a well grounded hope of heaven. Heaven is the inheritance of all believers, not by a natural right in themselves, but by God's free gift, through Christ; but though it is a free gift through Christ, yet none can conclude he has a title to it without holi-

^v Heb. xiii. 14.

ness ; or say, it is his, before he has something wrought in him to prove it so. A man must have some ground for his faith, else it is presumption ; and he must have some reason for his hope, otherwise it is ridiculous, and a mere delusion. There is no taking of heaven by force for sinners. In one sense ^w, indeed, there is a taking heaven by violence ; holy souls, fill'd with zeal and ardour, and enflamed with earnest desires, take heaven by force ; but it is by weapons of God's providing ; they win their way, but it is by Christ's aid ; and they do marvellous things, but it is by the Holy Spirit's help ; and they reap the spoils of the victory, which the Redeemer has obtained for them. Unholy men can never scale the battlements of heaven, for they have no strength of their own to do it ; and not only the frowning cherub, with the flaming sword, guards the avenues to it, but an angry God stands as their irreconcilable enemy, to keep them out. Holiness is the indelible character which Christ sets upon all that are his ; without this, we may have a delusive irrational hope of heaven, but it will greatly injure us, and can never help us. A false hope in a sinner renders all admonitions unsuccessful, and, till his vain confidence is shook, he

^w Matt. xi. 12.

will not believe he needs conversion. An ill-grounded hope is the great engine of the devil to destroy souls, and it is worse than no expectation; for they will, of all men, be most miserable, who expect to be saved, and yet, when their breath has left their bodies, find themselves damn'd. When the wicked amuse themselves with vain expectations, the arrow of death strikes them to the heart, and makes an end of them, before it is fear'd, and their hope is disappointed by the king of terrors. They who are strangers to holiness, have but few thoughts about their eternal state, and seldom consider what will become of them when they die; and, if they are forced to hear of their mortality, they please themselves with slight apprehensions of God, as a being of all mercy: But, alas! when their souls go out of their bodies, the devil, who is the harbinger of misery, will drag them to the seats of darkness, where they will be prisoners without hope for ever. What will it profit men, if they fancy they shall go to heaven, if they wake, after they have slept the sleep of death, lying in the bowels of hell, with sights of woe before their eyes, and inexpressible horror in their minds? None should say they hope for heaven, if they are not holy, for without holiness, they can have no proof of their title to it.

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Except we are made holy, we have no meetness for the inheritance which is undefiled and incorruptible. We shall never be admitted to set one foot within the pure realms above, if we are not adorned with real sanctity. The righteousness of Christ is the cloathing which covers our defects, and the garments of holiness, which are put upon all who are justified, are the array which beautifies and adorns them: When this attire is put on here, a blessed glorious immortality is the raiment laid up for us, in the wardrobe of heaven. Death it self, as it is a simple disunion of the soul from the body, is not extremely terrible to some considerate believers; they see nothing in this world to court their stay, or to monopolize and chain their affections, and they behold nothing in death, as it is merely the pulling down, and shattering their old house, to deject and fill them with terror: To go out of the body, is no insuperable difficulty to them, but all their concern is, lest, when their souls are stripp'd of their clayie covering, they should be found unclothed; this, at times, sinks their spirits, and awakes their fears. The language of a pious soul is this: I am not unwilling to leave this life, and to be absent from the body; but I am not without concern, lest, when I am unclothed, my trembling soul should

be found naked, and without a covering. We must be cloathed with the spotless robe of Christ's righteousness, and we must be adorned with the grace of sanctification, otherwise we can never enter into the holy place, not made with hands: The oil of gladness will not be pour'd into our souls, unless our hearts are first seasoned with grace; and our spirits must be purified from all sinful imperfections, before we can inherit the glory of that blessed country, where there will be no place for what is imperfect and in part.

Without holiness, none can do the work of heaven, or perform the duties required there. One part of the work of heaven, is to behold the glorious face of God, and to stand continually before him. What are the morning stars, and the spirits of just men made perfect, doing in heaven? Are they not taken up in viewing the perfections and excellencies of God, and in admiring his attributes; such as his wisdom, power, truth, goodness, and especially his love to sinners? But what could unholy persons do there? They will not give God now any entertainment in their thoughts, and, as they have no intellectual eyes to behold his glory, so they are not fit to come into his presence; they are neither acquitted from their guilt, nor cleansed from their pollution; how then can they
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stand before the pure unspotted Majesty of God, who cannot look upon sin without the highest indignation, and the severest hatred? Praise is a principal work to be performed in the happy world above; this is what the saints offer to him that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb, who redeemed sinners by his blood, with the highest strains of holy rapture: It will be their constant work to fall down before the throne, and to sing the praises of the divine Persons, with the most raised and pure affections; and it will be the fullness of their joy to sound forth hallelujahs for ever. Now men void of holiness have no inclination to praise the Most High: Can they rejoice that God reigns, and has a dominion, of which there is no end, when they are only set upon rebellion against him? Can they shout for joy, that he has a kingdom that cannot be shook, and that he is exalted above all things, when they are inclined stubbornly to spurn at his authority? Can they compass his royal seat with songs of melody, when they would, if they were able, thrust him from his throne? Can they follow him with cheerful acclamations, when they are for setting their mouths against him? Can they extol his honour, when they delight to reproach his sacred name? It would be against all sense

and reason to say, that without holiness any could compass the throne of God, in heaven, with anthems of praise. The putting forth of perfect love, and unconfined affections to God, is a work of heaven: The apostle Paul has^{*} told us thus; "Love never fails, as to other things; whether they are prophecies, they shall fail, or tongues, they shall cease, or knowledge, it shall vanish away; for we know in part, and we prophesy in part, but as soon as what is perfect shall come, what is in part shall be done away." Prophecies, or gifts of explaining scripture, shall fail, tongues, or an ability of expressing the inward conceptions of the mind, in different languages, shall cease, and the knowledge of spiritual things, which we gather up from tedious methods of reasoning, and by framing in our minds such apprehensions of divine truths, as hold up some analogy to sensible objects, shall vanish and pass away, and give place to what is clear, easy, certain, and void of all mistakes; but love to God never fails, it will continue for ever. What is this love, in its perfection, but the gratitude of heavenly spirits to God, their benefactor, who is superlatively excellent, predominantly sweet, infinitely blessed, and supremely amiable in

^{*} 1 Cor. xiii, 8, 9, 10.

himself? This love of souls to God in heaven, is without all weakness, mixtures, damps, and pull-backs; it twists and binds them to God, all the selfishness of their wills is lost, and they are entirely resigned to his will. Now is not this incompatible with an unholy disposition? Can they be united to God, who hate him, and refuse subjection to his laws all the time they are here? Can they clasp about him, as the chiefest good hereafter, who prefer the very dust of the earth before him in this life? Certainly no: None can act any grace, in its perfection, in heaven, which he has not, in its root and principle, on earth: Every grace will be perfected in heaven, but no new grace is begun there. Can carnal sinners have ardent love to God, and cleave to him, when their affections are set against him? Can they find a predominant delight in him, when their hatred against him is blown up to the highest pitch? Can they have pleasure in his holiness, when their souls are full of burning lusts? We must not so far deny our reason, as to say, that men can both love and hate God, both obey and oppose him, both find sweetness in him, and invidiously rise up against him, both take delight in his holiness, and feel pleasure in sin. If men have no satisfaction in meditating on God, and in conversing with him in their thoughts,

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now, when he is distant, and removed out of their sight, they would take no delight in him, if they were brought to stand before the presence of his glory, and to behold the brightness of his face in the country of vision above.

Without holiness, none can relish the enjoyments of heaven. A corrupt man, with a sea of sin rolling and tossing in his breast, would find no rest or pleasure in heaven, if we could suppose he was carried thither. He would find no sweetness in communion with God, who is the source of all the happiness enjoy'd in the other world. It is the presence of God that makes heaven a place of delight; but he would be at everlasting variance with him. One who is not sanctified, could never suit himself to the company of heaven; he would find no joy in the society of saints and angels, against whom he has the greatest antipathy. Was he admitted into heaven, where the saints sit, with their wedding garments on, as they would be a burden to him, so he would disturb their joys, and damp that cheerful fire of love, which flames in their innocent breasts. The impure sinner cannot be regaled with the perfect pleasures of heaven, because there is no agreement between them and his prevailing frame: Heaven is full of rational and sublime delights,

lights, but none can enjoy them, till they are made meet for them by sanctification. Therefore the old depraved nature must be done away, or else men must be for ever separated from God himself; they must, without possibility of admission, be shut out of the society of saints and angels, and they must be deprived of joys substantial and real. God will not leave heaven to take sinners into it; he will not destroy the comfort of the princes of light, and the spirits of just men made perfect, by bringing impure creatures to interrupt their sweet fellowship; and he will not convert the holy recreations of the upper world into imperfection, to suit the gust of sordid transgressors. If these things are duly weighed, it will appear, that a man must be made holy, before he can see, or enter into the kingdom of God; and if so, then there is no encouragement given to licentiousness; though it is affirm'd, that everlasting blessedness is from the grace of God, and is the reward of Christ's obedience, and is not owing to the holiness of men.

THE APPLICATION.

We see that the glorious doctrine of man's salvation being from the free grace of God, as manifested in and through Christ, has not the least tendency, in its
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own nature, to promote looseness of life, but, on the contrary, to enforce strictness and holiness in the conversation: Let us then, if we assent to it, be careful not to abuse it, misrepresent it, or pervert it from its true design and real drift; but let us earnestly endeavour to be a credit to it, and to adorn the gospel of our Lord and Saviour, by a regular and well order'd conversation. The generation of blind, legal, formal professors, who are too significant in their own esteem to acknowledge, that the whole of all their salvation is owing to free grace, and who will ever be looking for something in themselves, to render them worthy of, or at least qualified for the favour of God, will always be cavilling against the true evangelical doctrine, as if it encouraged looseness, and slandering it, as if it open'd a door to Antinomian errors. Let us then not only endeavour to be furnished with arguments, to refute them, and to vindicate the glorious gospel of the blessed God from their vile calumnies, but let us, in the strength of Christ, live down their objections, and shew, by the whole tenor of our conversation, that the grace of God is not an unoperative thing; that it does not indulge those who are the subjects of it in laziness and indolence, much less in looseness and impurity; but that it puts them upon

bringing honour to it, by a pious, pure, honest, and prudent walk. Let us shape our course by those words of the apostle Paul, wherein he has set this matter in a very beautiful light; which, as they are a noble account of the genuine tendency of the doctrine of free grace, so they contain a sure directory to all that have embraced the gospel of peace: They have been produced above, but ^v they cannot be repeated too often: “The grace of God, which brings salvation, has appear’d to all men, teaching them, that denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts, they should live soberly, righteously, and piously, in this present world, looking for the blessed hope, even the glorious appearance of our great God and Saviour, Christ Jesus, who gave himself for us, to redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” If we would manifest that we are partakers of divine grace, and are in a state of salvation; if we would with comfort look for the second appearance of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, and expect, that as matter of blessed hope, which will be to the terror of the unbelievers and the ungodly; and if we would comply with his design, in giving himself for us, and answer his end in

redeeming us to himself, then let us be afraid of all iniquity, fly the least appearance of evil, and hate the garment spotted with the flesh; let us deny all ungodliness, renounce the hidden things of dishonesty, and forsake the lusts of the flesh, and of the mind; and let us be zealous for good works, diligent to obey the law, and careful to behave piously towards God, act honestly, and live temperately; unless we do this, all our big words about the grace of God, are but swelling words of vanity, our hope is but groundless, and we endeavour to thwart Christ's design in redeeming men. Let us then evidence that we are the elect of God, and predestinated by him to salvation, that we are redeemed by Christ, and justified by his righteousness, that we are converted by the Holy Spirit, and are his workmanship, and that we have good hope of heaven through grace, and are the expectants of a blessed immortality, by our holy, righteous, pure and prudent behaviour.

Let us stand at the greatest distance from all sin; whatever we are convinced is forbid by God, in his holy law, let us start from: Let us forsake the lusts of the flesh, or avoid all open and scandalous disorders; but let us not be content with this, lest we should be only like whited tombs, which make a fair shew without, but within are

full of rottenness and corruption ; let us, at the same time that we mortify the desires of the flesh, crucify the imperious and dangerous lusts of the mind ; let us not give way to pride, malice, envy, hatred, and self-seeking : When in many things we all offend, let us not entertain light thoughts of sin, much less give way to transgress presumptuously ; let us be deeply humbled, that we so often provoke the Most High, by sinning in thought, in word, and in deed ; let us hate and abhor sin, and look upon it to be most abominable, because it is odious to a God of infinite goodness, occasioned the groans, agonies, and death of a kind Saviour, and tends to bring ruin on our immortal souls ; let us condemn our selves, that we have committed what is of so hurtful a nature ; let us be fill'd with godly sorrow for sin, and take a holy revenge upon it ; let us, by the help of the Spirit, turn from it to God ; and, as we sin daily, let us delight to renew our work of repentance every day we live : Let us never comply with any thing which is evil, which a corrupt age has made customary, but let us take pleasure in that singularity, which is commendable, which is to stand off from every thing that has a tendency to dishonour God, to wound the peace of our own consciences,

sciences, and to discredit that pure religion which we profess.

Let us practise all moral duties, and Christian graces; let us act justly, warily, and honestly, in our dealings with men; let us make conscience to perform all our promises, to make good all our engagements, and to be faithful to every trust committed to us: Let us be temperate in our using the things which are appointed for the support and comfort of life, moderate in our pursuit of the world, and wary and careful to provide things honest in the sight of all men; let us be humble in our carriage and deportment, and be amiable in our behaviour; let us be even in our temper, if we are compass'd about with prosperity, patient in adversity, in bearing ill treatment, and enduring insults, and ready to forgive all personal injuries; let us be resigned to the will of God, whatever condition of life he may involve us in, and desire, in whatsoever state we are, therewith to be content; let us love mercy, and be ready to shew pity to any in distress; let us relieve the wants of others, as we are able, and do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith; let us shew benevolence to all mankind, even to those whose principles and practices we may most detest, and let

us not oppress any, if we have it in our power ; let us shew great love to our Christian brethren, and manifest true affection to all who are children of the same Father, professors of the same faith, and travellers to the same land of rest.

Let us make conscience to act with sincere piety towards God ; let us receive the important truths which he has revealed in his word, and, with zeal regulated by knowledge, hold them fast, when they are denied and contested, by such as are strangers to the wisdom which is from above ; let us stand up for all that tends to secure the honour of free grace, to exalt Christ, and to promote holiness, and keep our loyalty, our faith, and love to the King of Sion, the Captain of our salvation ; let us search the scriptures, and inform our selves about the mind and will of our heavenly Father ; let us walk in all the ordinances and institutions of the Most High, blameless, and be careful to perform the duties we owe immediately to God, and pay the worship which he requires ; let us be frequent in meditation, and constant in prayer, and engage in the several parts of worship required of us, in due place, and proper season ; let us not omit private religion, and let us keep our selves from the view of men, in secret duties, as much as possi-

ble; let us take care that the voice of prayer is heard in our families, and the morning and evening sacrifice of praise is offer'd up in our houses; let us keep holy the day of the son of man, and not forsake the assembling of our selves for the publick worship of God upon it; let us delight to offer up social worship to our God and our king, and to join with others in compassing his altar with our supplications, and to attend on his word preached, and hear the joyful sound; let us, if we are in church-fellowship, keep our solemn vows, honour them who have the rule over us, and speak to us the word of life, watch over one another, and celebrate the supper of our Lord, remembering his death with faith, love, thankfulness, godly sorrow, and holy joy; let us labour to engage in that ordinance, and in all the parts of worship, with life and vigour, with circumspection and fervour, and without formality and deadness, without slightness and unconcernedness, that so the words of our mouths, and the meditations of our hearts, may be pleasing to that God whom we serve:

When we do the things mentioned, let us not give way to the insolent vanity of thinking to make God our debtor, or to purchase heaven; but, when we have done
most,

most, let us be ready to own, that we are unprofitable servants, in having done no more than our duty, and that we are, in part, unfaithful servants, as we omit many things we are obliged to; let us, in all we do, whether of a moral, civil, or religious nature, act from a principle of love to God, with a regard to the rule which he has given us, in his word, and with a sincere desire to advance his glory, whose we are, and to whom we are indebted for all the blessings pertaining to life and godliness; let us, under a sense of our weakness and ignorance, be frequently applying ourselves, by prayer, to the God of all grace, that he would bring us to know our duty, and would enable us constantly to perform it; that so we may credit religion, and may adorn the profession we make of his name, as well as expect salvation as the gift of grace; and the reward of Christ's purchase.

Let us, at the same time that we renounce all confidence in the flesh, and cast aside all trust in our own performances, rely on Christ for assistance to keep the faith, to run our race, and to fight the good fight; let us determine that in Jesus, who is the Lord Jehovah, our Saviour and our God, we will have strength, as well as righteousness; let us comfort our selves with

considering that he is unchangeable in his truth, to make good his promises, that he is ever present with us, to guard us, that he knows all our wants, and is infinite in wisdom, to order all things for our good, that he is Almighty in power, to defend us against enemies, and to finish his own work in us, and that he is boundless in goodness, mercy, and compassion, to bestow upon us all things that tend to our happiness and well-being : Having such a glorious Captain of salvation, and such a powerful Leader, to the peaceful provinces of immortality, let us go through the wilderness of this world, leaning upon him our beloved and our friend, and we need not fear but that he will enable us to act as becomes the gospel, and to bring credit to the doctrine of grace, which we profess, by doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly and piously with our God ; and then when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we shall appear with him in glory, and, as the sincere followers of the Lamb, shall sit together with him in heavenly places ; where crowns of glory will circle our brows, and palms of victory will grace our hands ; where the white attire of innocence will deck us, and the glittering array of light will adorn us ; and where pleasures, grown to full perfection, will always

regale us, and joys, substantial and sincere,
will to eternity delight us.

To the Father of mercies, who, out of his sovereign pleasure, chose us to salvation, before the foundation of the world, that we might be holy and blameless before him in love; to the Son, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works; and to the Holy Spirit, who changes the whole frame of our minds, that we may walk in newness of life; to these three divine Persons, but the one supreme God, whom we adore, be honour, praise, and glory, in all the churches, now, henceforth, and for evermore. Amen.





A

HUMBLE and IMPARTIAL

ENQUIRY

INTO THE CAUSES OF THE DECAY OF

PRACTICAL RELIGION;

OR INTO THE TRUE

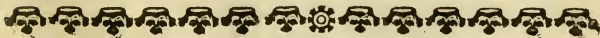
GROUND^S of the DECLENSIONS,

AS TO THE

LIFE and POWER of GODLINESS,

VISIBLE IN SUCH AS PROFESS
IT IN THE PRESENT DAY.


By ABRAHAM TAYLOR,
Minister of the Gospel.





REV. iii. 1, 2, 3.

To the angel of the church at Sardis write, These things says he who has the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead: Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, and are ready to die; for I have not found thy works upright before God: Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast and repent. If therefore thou wilt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

UR Lord Jesus Christ is the sole King in his church, and no single man, nor any collective bodies of men, should, on any pretence, usurp his power. What doctrines he has seen fit to reveal, are to be received
on

on his authority, though they may not come wholly within the grasp of our finite understandings; the worship which he has judged proper to prescribe, must be religiously kept to, though it may not, for want of pomp and pageantry, be pleasing to the flesh; and the duties of practical godliness, which he has declared are to be performed by all his followers, must not be neglected, though they may be difficult to be observed. When men inculcate doctrines, which Christ never revealed, they offer him a high affront; when they prescribe methods of worship, which he never commanded, they, with daring insolence, incroach on his prerogative; and, when they enjoin austerities, which he never required, they set their wisdom above his. On the other hand, when men take upon them to bring persons off from regarding the great mysteries of the gospel, which the true and faithful Witness has made known, under the pretence that they are abstruse speculations, matters of dispute, and things which tend to shut out charity, the greatest of all graces, they break their allegiance to Christ, and go about sacrilegiously to rob his followers of the sacred treasure of faith; when any refuse to be found engaged in the worship which the King of Sion has appointed, they cast contempt on him, and declare they will not walk

walk within the sacred enclosures which he has placed about his church ; and when any neglect that internal and external purity, which the holy and the just One has required, they shew they have no part or interest in him. If a professing people are zealous for the truths of the gospel, if they are careful to regulate their worship, by the pattern given in the word, and if they abound in the works of righteousness, and shine in the beauties of holiness, it may be said, that the glory of Christ resides among them, and that their blessings will be crowned with a desirable increase ; but if they are lukewarm and indifferent, as to the great truths of the gospel, if they are negligent in attending on the worship appointed by their great Prophet and King, and if they act dissolutely, and, instead of denying themselves, symbolize with the profane world, it may be said of them, that their beauty is tarnished, that grey hairs, the tokens of spiritual decays, are upon them, and the glory is upon the departure. When it is thus, they provoke Christ, by their sordid ingratitude, to remove their candlestick out of its place, unless they repent, they grieve the Holy Spirit, and he withdraws himself as to his comforting presence, and as to his accompanying ordinances with his efficacious power, so that they are given up to a lifeless

less formality ; and though by their continuing to make a profession, they have a name to live, yet, in reality, there is a death upon their comforts, and they do not act with that vigour in serving Christ, which becomes persons who are alive.

In the chapter from whence the words are taken, and in that preceding, the beloved disciple John, the last survivor of the apostles, has set down the letters which his exalted Master directed him to write to seven famous churches of the provincial Asia. His life was lengthen'd out far beyond any of the other companions of the Lord, and when he was advancing towards a hundred years, he was, in the second persecution, raised by Domitian, banished into Patmos^a, a lonely island in the Archipelago ; where being retired on a Lord's day for meditation, his exalted Master, who had for many years been out of the sight of his bodily eyes, was pleased to appear to him, in a very magnificent and glorious form, and audibly to proclaim himself the sole Head and King of the church, and to dictate to him seven short epistles, to be sent to the seven principal churches of the province of Asia, to

^a A. D. xcv. Secundus post Neronem, Domitianus, Christianos persequitur, & sub eo apostolus Johannes, in Patmon insulam relegatus, Apocalypsin vidit. Hieron. in Chronic. p. 164. Ed. Amst.

rouse such as were under declensions, and to encourage such as were true to his cause and interest. When he returned from exile ^b, under Nerva, he committed this book to writing for the use of all the churches.

It has been matter of a warm contest for some years, among our brethren in the united provinces, whether these epistles are to be understood, as having only a literal reference to the seven churches, which were then in Asia, or whether they are a prophetic representation of what was to fall out, in the Christian churches, to the end of time, in seven periods; and it must be own'd, that this controversy has been carried on with so much heat, especially by the followers of the learned Cocceius, who are for the prophetic sense, that it has made great inroads on brotherly love, and has taken up many able and excellent pens, which might have been employ'd in matters of greater importance. I will not take upon me peremptorily to determine which ^c party have best hit the mind and will

^b A. D. xcvi. Senatus decrevit, ut omnia quae Domitianus statuerat in irritum deducerentur, itaque multi quos injuste ejecerat de exilio reversi.——Aunt apostolum Johannem hoc tempore exilio solutum, Ephesum recessisse; in qua urbe, & hospitium & amicos sui amantissimos habebat. Idem, ibid.

^c The reader may see this matter discuss'd by two very learned men, M. Witsius, (Vid. Misc. Sac. Vol. I. Lib. 3.) and

will of the Holy Spirit; I must, however, just hint, that a great difficulty sticks with me with relation to the supposition, that these epistles contain an account of the Christian church, under seven periods, till the end of all things; and that is, the church is only represented, either in a suffering, or in a declining condition; but there is nothing said of that glorious state of it, which^d we, from the scriptures, believe, will be before the end of time: I cannot but think, if this had been design'd as a representation of the state of the Christian churches, in seven scenes, till the consummation of all things, we should have had something said of the glory of the later days, which some of our brethren, who are for the doctrine of seven periods, allow, as well as others.

The words which I have chose for the subject of present meditation, are part of the letter wrote to the church at Sardis. Christ begun with setting forth his own prerogative; he has the seven Spirits, or he distributes the various operations of his Spirit as he pleases, and makes a more

and M. a Marck, who, I hear, has newly enter'd into his master's joy, (Pref. ad Com. in Apoc.) See also the very learned M. Vitringas's Commentary, who, though not a profess'd Cocceian, here falls in with the propheticall sense.

^d See my Sermon on Nov. 5. p. 39—46.

plentiful effusion at one time than another; he has the seven stars, or he over-rules, directs, all the ministers in his church, and they are accountable to him: He declared his omniscience, when he said, "I know thy works;" he judged not by appearance, because he is the searcher of hearts: He described the members of the church of Sardis to be in a very declining condition, to have a name to live, but, in reality, to have so little life left, that it might be said, they were dead in spiritual declensions; and he has told us, that he found not their works perfect or upright with God, or that he saw too much formality and hypocrisy among them: He warn'd them of their danger, commanded them to be watchful, to strengthen what was left, which was commendable, which was ready to expire, to call to mind, and hold fast, the truths they had received and heard, and to repent of their back-slidings: And he added a severe threat, in case they were regardless of his admonitions, that he would visit them in a way of severity; and that suddenly, when they might least fear his coming, he would act as a swift witness against them. It has been observed, that it does not appear, from what is here mentioned, that the faith which they profess'd was chargeable with errors, or that their worship was sullied with superstition;

but as there does not seem to be any advantage resulting from such an observation, it is rather probable, from their being commanded to hold fast what they had heard, and learned, that they were declining in zeal for the doctrines of the gospel, as well as that practical religion was at a low ebb, and almost ready to expire among them.

We may allow, as indeed it seems to be the justest account of the matter, that these epistles had a literal reference to the churches then in Asia, which were overrun with the Gnostics and Nicolaitans, who denied the union of the divine and human nature in Christ, maintain'd, that equivocation, and occasional conformity to the Heathen ceremonies were lawful, and abused the doctrine of grace, to the encouraging of loose practices: However, seeing all that is written in scripture is recorded for our learning and use, we, in these after-ages, may compare our selves with the more ancient churches, and may expect, that if we are like them, the threatenings which were denounced against them, may be understood to be, in some measure, level'd against us. We may not have the same errors started now as were disseminated in the Asiatic churches, neither may the same deviations from that holiness, which is required in all that embrace the gospel, be found among us, as
were

were to be met with in them. However, if our errors in doctrine are as pernicious, though of a different sort, and our deeds, though running in another channel, are as bad, we must own that we have a name to live; but are dead; and we may suppose, that Christ commands us to be watchful, to strengthen the things which remain, and are ready to die, and to remember, and hold fast, what we have learn'd, and repent; lest he visits us in the way of his judgments, when we least expect it.

I. I shall briefly set forth what is the state of religion among us.

I shall not concern my self with those who are of the national establishment, nor with those who are pretty much of our sentiments, in the countries under the same civil government with us; but I shall confine my self to such as take the title of English Protestant Dissenters. And here no words can be too full of emphasis to set forth our condition; nay, words are wanting, to shew how we have fallen from our first love. A zeal for the honour of Christ, an ardent concern for exalting the glory of the free grace of God, in contriving and executing our salvation, a desire to have the fallen creature depress'd, and to have works of any sort excluded from contributing to salvation, and a care to

abound in holiness, and to promote practical religion in the closet, in the family, and in the publick, were formerly the glories of our cause, and were the noble badges and amiable marks of the generality of them, who deprived themselves of many worldly emoluments, that they might not prostitute their consciences, by complying with what they judged to be disagreeable to the scripture rule. While they thus held fast their integrity, they were greatly honoured of God; they were mighty in word, they were powerful in prayer; the work of conversion was successfully carried on, and many, who had a good disposition wrought in them, flock'd into churches: Then were seen the evident signals of the Holy Spirit's presence, and great strictness was kept up among those who made a religious profession. These things we have heard with our ears, and our fathers have told us; and some survive, who have a remembrance how matters formerly stood among us, whilst we were under the disadvantages of penal laws, and had the powers of the earth engaged against us, and had none to protect us, in the enjoyment of the rights, which belong'd to us, as men and Christians. At last, it pleased God to loose our bands, and to set our feet in a large place; but how are we alter'd for the worse, since we
enjoy'd

enjoy'd our liberties? The first abuse of our freedom was, to relinquish the ancient, as well as genuine Christian doctrine of justification by the righteousness of Christ, to deny the perfection of the moral law, and to substitute a pretended law of grace, which required sincere obedience, instead of perfect righteousness: This was accompanied with a decay of practical religion, and we have since been gradually declining, till now; and it may be said of us, that we have run the utmost length in error, and have taken the greatest compass in sin. When we compare the present state of religion among us, with what it was formerly, we may say, how are we fallen from our first state? how are we cut down to the ground? how is our zeal turn'd into lukewarmness, and our circumspection into dissoluteness? Slight thoughts of the Christian revelation abound, so that infidelity is almost ready to prevail; error never was more rampant than it now is; private, family, and publick worship, were never more neglected; and covetousness, pride, self-conceit, and licentiousness, never more abounded.

It may not seem likely, that the charge of Atheism can be brought against such as profess religion; and it must be owned, that none are so hardy as to deny the being of a God, who do not cast off all the restraints

of profession, but some have gone so far as to assert, that there are moral fitnesses, with regard to human actions, previous in nature to the will of God: This, whatever they may think, or however they may endeavour to fortify themselves with a mist of glib, though unintelligible sentences, is to set up a system of morality without God at the head of it. They pretend, that there is not any obligation previous to the will of God, but only in order of nature; but yet that the obligation to obedience necessarily results from the nature of things, though some of the particular instances, and trials of this obedience, may depend entirely on the will of God; and that there are eternal and unchangeable fitnesses in things, from which only we can be certain of the unchangeableness of God in his purposes and promises, and government of the world. If this has not a tendency to introduce the exploded and unintelligible jargon of an eternal and unchangeable fate, by which the purposes of the supreme God are confined, which was the hideous representation of this matter, among the Heathen, it is hard to say, when one thing is like another. These are the unworthy representations which are given us of God, and of the foundations of morality; this is setting some unintelligible principle, as moral fitness, the reason of things, or the like,

like, above God, which is a great advance towards Atheism, and can have no other effect than making men think there is no need of a God to govern the world. Many, who call themselves Christians now, will scarce allow that we are accountable to God; and many, who say the Bible is their religion, eagerly contend, that natural religion, or reason, is a sufficient rule for men to walk by.

As to the doctrines contain'd in scripture, they are almost all now struck out of the list of articles of faith: Error may truly be said to come in like a flood, and to spread it self like a raging torrent; we may cry out, the floods have lifted up their voice, the floods have lifted up their waves. Most of the pernicious errors which have formerly been brought into the church, are eagerly embraced, in our unhappy times; the enemies have, for some years, been endeavouring to rob Christ and the Holy Spirit of the glory of their supreme divinity, and to reduce them to the rank of creatures; and now men grow bolder in error, they are forward to deny their personality, and to make them only attributes, powers, and names of the Father: God's election of his people to glory, is arraigned as unreasonable, and his sovereignty is, in the most saucy manner, opposed; the fall of man is entirely forgot,

and his original corruption is eagerly denied; the satisfaction of Christ is blasphemed and exploded, and his death is said to be what must, according to necessity of nature, have fallen out: Justification by his righteousness, is a point pursued with rancour and malice; and sincerity, though in an error, is given out to be a sufficient title to God's favour: Preaching Christ in his Person, offices, and in the merit of his death, undergoes the persecution of cruel mockings, and is spoke of by brain-sick novices only with a sneer: The efficacious grace of the Holy Spirit, and his sanctifying and comforting influences, are rudely blasphemed as enthusiasm, and the power of man, to convert himself, and to answer the ends of his living in the world, is eagerly contended for; tho' those who plead for this power, let us see, that, if they have it, it may be in them, without being put into act: The perseverance of the saints in holiness, is profanely banter'd: The stupid and brutish notion of the soul's sleeping after death, is, by some, hotly maintain'd, and its immateriality and immortality are exploded by others; the resurrection of the same body is represented as impossible; and a general judgment, nay, a particular time of mens appearing before God, to give an account of what they have done in the body, is now a subject of
ridi-

ridicule; and the doctrine of the wicked being reserved for eternal torments, is, by many, set by. This, without straining, nay, without amplifying the matter, is an account how things stand with us, as to matters of belief. What adds to our unhappiness is, many who do not run the aforesaid lengths, too much strengthen the party of the enemies of the truth, and too much weaken the hands of the real friends of the Christian cause, by representing these great and important doctrines as matters of mere abstruse speculation, and by branding all concern for them, as indiscreet zeal, and charging all endeavours to contend for them, as taking the Spirit's work out of his hand, or as breaking in upon Christian charity. Many act as if they valued more to be commended by an infidel, as men of little larger thought, and freer enquiry, than their neighbours, than to have a testimony in the consciences of good Christians, who cannot but think that they are more concerned for their own things, than they are for the things of God: And while they gain the good word of the enemies of the gospel, they consider not how much grief they occasion, to such as love the truth as it is in Jesus.

As matters are on a very bad foot with us, with respect to faith, if we impartially continue our survey, we shall not find

they are better, with respect to practice. A declension in faith is always attended with disaffection to the practical duties, which are prescribed in the same divine oracles, that reveal the mysteries we are to believe. I cannot help thinking, that some, who would appear to be very eager advocates for the doctrine of grace, have done much harm to religion, by pretending that the law is of no use to such as are in Christ, and by discovering much want of temper, if they, at any time, hear the duties of practical godliness stated and press'd. Some have called discouraging on the power of godliness, on repentance, self-denial, and mortification, low stuff, and have been easy to hear of nothing but electing love and free grace: Such do harm to the cause which they espouse and plead for, by going about to separate what God has join'd together; it is certain, that they have greatly strengthen'd legal professors in their dislike of the doctrine of grace; not to mention the real disgrace they too often bring upon it, for they are not always found to be so circumspect in their dealings and behaviour, as they ought.

If we leave the before mention'd persons, and look to others, it must be said, that practical religion runs lower among no sort of men, than those who hear little else press'd upon them. There never was less
regard

regard paid to the Lord's day, than is now; many, who do not run into all lengths of immorality, scruple not to make it a day of pleasure and recreation, and the negligence of professors, in attending on God, in the publick worship of the sanctuary, is every day growing more flagrant; they despise the sacred provisions of Sion, and, though they are not arrived at such height of insolence, as to deny, in words, the obligation they lie under, to attend on publick ordinances, yet, by their not countenancing the institutions of Christ with their presence, they shew how little they regard his authority. Family religion is likewise greatly neglected; we frequently hear of many prayerless families, the heads of which should, as we might think, considering their profession, be ashamed of giving cause for such a complaint: And if men neglect publick worship, and will not keep up family duty, it is scarce to be thought that they mind private religion; or that if they perform secret devotions at all, they do it in any other than in a cold, formal, stiff manner. In short, the power of godliness is very much lost in the world. It must be own'd, that great endeavours have been used to bring professing Christians to a sense of their duty; general and concerted efforts have been made, to impress their minds with a sense of the necessity they
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lie under, to offer up the morning and the evening sacrifice of prayer and praise in their families, and of attending on the publick ordinances of the sanctuary ; but we cannot say that we see these attempts have been so successful, as we could wish, and have desired ; on the contrary, our desolation, with respect to practical religion, spreads as a mighty torrent, notwithstanding all the mounds which have been cast up to stop the course of it.

Since we have had so much talk of natural religion, and have had our ears almost stun'd with the noise, that moral duties are of much greater importance than positive institutions, we cannot say that morality flourishes in the least. That Christian simplicity and godly sincerity in the conversation, for which the generation that is now gone off the stage were so remarkable, are not seen among such as have sprung up in their room : A new set of professors is started up, who, by their negligence, as to private and social duties, almost tempt us to think, that they know not the God of their fathers. Moral justice was never at a lower ebb than it now is, and there were never such numbers of cheating pretenders to religion, who distress others, to maintain themselves in luxury, as are in our day.

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We have had many tragical complaints of a narrow spirit, and the want of Christian love; and it must be said, that the great duties of love and forbearance are too much forgot. It has been an artifice by which some, who have not discover'd the concern that might been wish'd, for the faith once deliver'd to the saints, have made their way into the esteem of such as have more of affection than judgment, to engross to themselves the character of being men of charity; and many sentences of scripture, which speak of that love which Christians should keep up to their brethren, or those who are friends to the truth, have been frequently used and inculcated, as if they express'd the treatment we should give such as we are apprehensive are enemies to, and opposers of what we are persuaded is the true faith, reveal'd in the holy scriptures: We cannot but think, that, in this, a wrong construction is put on many texts. We are not to cast off pity; on the contrary, we are to shew benevolence to the most erroneous, but we must not, we cannot, believe that they, who oppose the doctrines we have learned from scripture, have a title to be as much valued by us, as sincere searchers after truth, as they who stand up for the honour of our dearest Lord: But, to let that pass, we do not so much blame them who
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are loudest in their cry for charity, for excess of it, as we do for their want of it: We cannot see they act more charity, than such as they censure, as being narrow spirited. Indeed, if any person starts the most monstrous errors, we cannot but say, that they plead for all forbearance to be shew'd to him; but let a man once stand up in defence of what these persons do not pretend to deny to be their faith, we cannot see they will make the least allowance for what they count his defects, and which, according to their own large principles, they should pity and overlook; on the contrary, they scarce know how to vent their displeasure enough against him.

This is an imperfect account of the state of religion among us; and if there is any defect in it, it does not lie in this, that things are represented to be worse than they are, but rather in not setting forth the state of our affairs, in such black colours, as they really admit. When we see such increasing declensions, we cannot but say, that though we have a name to live, yet we are in a manner dead, and that though we keep up a profession of Christianity, we have, as to faith and practice, lost our first love. Of these decays we ought to be sensible, otherwise we can never remember from whence we have fallen, repent of our sins, be watchful, or strengthen the things

things which remain, which are ready to die ; but shall go on farther to provoke the King of the church to come upon us, when we least expect it, in a way of displeasure, and to remove our candlestick out of its place.

II. I shall enquire into the true causes of the decay of practical religion in our time.

All who make a profession of religion, are not concern'd, as, we cannot but humbly apprehend, they ought to be, for the ravages which are daily made on our most holy faith, or on the doctrines of Christianity ; but all, who have any thing of a serious temper, seem to be alarmed at the great defection, as to matters of practical religion. It is to be wish'd, it could be said, that all who see these declensions, were as sensible of the true causes of them ; but, it is to be fear'd, many have not a right notion of what really lies at the bottom of our prevailing back-slidings, and are for ascribing them to things which are so far from having a tendency to promote them, that they are the only things which are proper to prevent them. Some of the true causes of our great decays, are these following, and it is matter of sorrow that there is reason to mention them.

i. One great cause of the decay of practical religion, is the too general contempt which is cast upon the important doctrines of the gospel, and in standing up in their defence against seducers, who endeavour to rob Christians of them. I am sensible, it has been often given out, that the people have heard so much of what some call matters of speculation, and points of dispute, that by this they have been taken off from minding the more important things which refer to practice: And it has been said, that whoever goes far in controversy, weakens practical religion. It is very difficult to see any force in these arguings; how engaging in controversy, in defence of points of belief, which are founded on the same divine authority, as the duties of practical religion, can weaken this, is hard to be conceived: Nay, there is as much ground to censure us, if we launch into controversies, relating to the duties required of us; and then we must give up every thing which men take it in their heads to deny. Our obligations to keep the sabbath, to worship God in publick, to keep up family religion, to submit to baptism, and to come to the table of the Lord, are controverted, and the maintaining of them will run us into as large a field of debate, as any doctrinal article. These afford questions, and occasion disputes; yet such as are

afraid of weakening practical religion by controversy, would scarce give up these; so that we cannot think that it is bare controversy which is disliked, but the doctrines themselves, which are in controversy defended.

It has been a piece of advice given to us, who serve Christ in the work of the ministry, by such as we, on many accounts, value and regard; that sublime speculations, and abstruse controversies, should not ordinarily be introduced into our sermons, for that these minister questions, rather than godly edifying: And they observe, that is an easy matter to engage our warmer hearers on subjects, which neither they nor we can fully understand; that this is the ready way to procure the regards of those, who lay a mighty stress on their own opinions; but that their esteem will be purchased at too dear a rate, since, instead of promoting true religion, it will certainly destroy it; that where this zeal and contention is, there is strife, and every evil work; that though some may admire it for its shining lustre, yet fatal experience proves it to be a raging flame; and, where it breaks out, there is reason to fear that practical godliness will soon be consumed. It is not easy to say against what sort of men this counsel is level'd, it being couch'd in such general terms; if by
avoid-

avoiding sublime questions, and abstruse controversies, nothing more is meant, than not introducing questions about the unreveal'd mode of scripture mysteries, and not bringing into sermons the whimsical attempts of vain and conceited projectors, to give clear and bright ideas how things can be, in matters that surpass our understanding, every wise man will fall in with it; for he will not think it worth his while to trouble himself to defend the dreams of bold intruders into things not seen, and idle pretenders to science, falsely so called: But if by abstruse controversies, and sublime speculations, are meant the controverted doctrines of the gospel, which have such a depth of mystery in them, that they can be fully comprehended, neither by preacher nor hearers, it sounds a little harsh to say, that when zeal for these breaks out, practical religion will be consumed; because, in fact, it has been seen, that as people have grown uneasy, at having these doctrines unfolded, their regard to practical religion has lessen'd. In the times of our fathers, when there were more pulpit skirmishes, as they are called, by way of contempt, which made sport for unbelievers, who banter, ridicule, and speak evil of they know not what, there was much more of real religion, than is now: Nay, bad as the times are, it is seen, that such as are
against

against moving the ancient land-marks, and pulling up the old barriers of truth, who love to have their own opinions, on which they lay a mighty stress, and that justly, because they have had a practical knowledge, how much they are for a Christian's comfort, stated, maintained, and defended, against the attempts of the enemy, are the persons who have practical religion most at heart, and who are most diligent in performing the duties of it. The far greater number of the sabbath-breakers, the despisers of publick worship, and the neglecters of family religion, are not to be found among those who hold fast the old doctrines, but among those who prate against creeds, confessions, and systems, and who are for paying no regard to points of doctrine.

Every one, who knows any thing of the present state of affairs, must be sensible this is a truth: And, indeed, it can hardly be otherwise; for if men are once connived at, in breaking their allegiance to Christ, in one respect, they will, on the same principles, assume to themselves a liberty to do it in another, if it suits their fancies; and gratifies their corruptions. The same scriptures declare, that, in the unity of the Godhead, there are three divine Persons, and that the Son is one with the Father in nature, and equal with him in perfections;

though distinct in Person, which tell us, that we must keep the sabbath, not forsake the assembling of our selves together, and pray always: When men hear, that the belief of a Trinity, which runs through the scripture, is a mere speculative felicity of hitting the divine nature right, in some particular modes of thinking, and that it is of no moment, whether they believe him who has their concerns in his hand, to be God, or a creature, a person or a power, it is natural for them to conclude, that it is of as little importance whether they spend the sabbath in publick worship, and pray in their families, or no; seeing it is the same scripture, which makes known points of doctrine to them, which prescribes their duty; and, if they may give up a gospel doctrine, to avoid controversy, they may as well give up a scripture^c duty, to prevent contest with such as are of another mind, and to ward off the putting themselves to trouble. They who give up any truth, which the scripture has reveal'd, are guilty of a breach of allegiance to Christ, and they are not

^c How declensions in practical duties have actually accompanied defections from the truths of the gospel among us, I have, since the preaching of this discourse, had opportunity more particularly to shew, in a sermon on spiritual declensions, and the danger of being insensible under them, to which I refer the reader, p. 23—33.

exempted from this charge, by their retaining many things, which he has made known and commanded ; because a man is as really, though not equally, a betrayer of Christ, who gives up one thing, which he has order'd to be retained, as he who throws up the whole of the Christian doctrine ; just as a man who joins with others to attack his prince's guards, in order to destroy his person, who has opportunity to kill but one of his attendants, is as really a traitor, as if he had been able to have kill'd all about him, and to have murder'd him at the same time : And none would believe him, if he was to say, that when he had kill'd one, he intended to do no more. When men give up a part of Christianity to please their own humour, or to keep in with its opposers, they will always be ready to give up all other parts of it, if it suits their interest ; for it is impossible that a man, who shews no value for the scripture account of Christ's person, incarnation, and satisfaction, can have any real regard to him, as the Governor of his church, any farther than it may be for his advantage to profess subjection to him. If a temptation offers, he will as much slight his institutions, as he is regardless what and who he is, and what he has done for sinners. On the whole, the little concern which many shew for the great doctrines

of the gospel, is a principal cause of the decay of practical religion, which we may all see, and ought greatly to lament.

2. One great cause of the decay of piety, is the neglect which has been of late, in preaching Christ. By preaching Christ, I do not mean haranguing upon some duties of natural religion, which are not contrary to his doctrines ; this is an odd conceit about preaching Christ : Thus the Pagans may be said to preach Christ. Mahomet stuff'd his Alcoran with many things taken from scripture ; at this rate, to preach up them, might enable a Christian to say, if he was among the Infidels, that he preach'd up Mahomet, when he might not say a word about Mahomet's being a true prophet, which is the fundamental of that religion. Preaching of Christ does not lie in stating such duties of natural religion, as might be pick'd up out of Xenophon, Plato, Aristotle, and Seneca, which are not entirely inconsistent with what we meet with in scripture ; yet it must be said of too many, who assume the title of Christian ministers, that if they preach Christ at all, it is in this way, only they state moral duties in a tedious dull manner, and without the smartness and nervousness for which some Pagan writers are remarkable.

If we take to us justly the title of preachers of Christ, we must instruct our hearers in the scripture account of his Person: If we are to make our great Master known to men, surely we must tell them, from the oracles of truth, who he is, and what he is. We must vindicate his real personality, or shew him to be distinct from the Father in Person, though one God with him, against such as make him only a name or a power of God: We must, in opposition to such as would reduce him to the rank of creatures, prove his supreme divinity, from his being called Jehovah and God, in an absolute sense; from his being declared to be one with the Father, and equal to him; from his having applied to him the highest titles of supremacy; from his being represented as necessarily existing, eternal, unchangeable, omniscient, immense, and almighty; from his being the Creator, the Preserver, Upholder, and end of all things; and from his receiving adoration: We must make known that he is God-man, or that he took into union with his divine Person the whole human nature, consisting of a real body, and a rational soul, not an angelic or superangelic spirit, and must evince the necessity there was, that he should be God and man, in one Person, that there might be infinite value in his merit, at the same time that

he had a capacity to suffer : We must defend the truth of his miracles, by which he confirm'd his doctrine, and the reality and the efficacy of his sufferings and death, by which he made full and proper satisfaction for the sins of the elect, and did not procure an uncertain precarious happiness for the whole world, and shew the necessity there was for him to rise and revive, that he might demonstrate, that he had accomplish'd his work, and that he might ascend into heaven, and, having taken his seat at the right hand of God, might intercede for his people, in an authoritative way, and that he might make a more plentiful effusion of his Spirit upon them : When we thus shew how he executes his office as a Priest, we must make him known in all his offices ; or, as he is the great Prophet of the church, who has given his followers a full revelation of the mind of God, and who savingly enlightens them, that they may receive the truth in love ; and as he is the King of saints, who renews, rules, and governs them, who strengthens them for duty, and who assists them against enemies : We must persuade and press men to look to Christ, as dying for sin, to rely upon him alone for pardon of guilt, and for righteousness to justify them, without adding their imperfect duties to his infinite merit, and to depend
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on him for strength, to perform sincere obedience, to encounter enemies, to grow in grace, and to persevere in holiness, till, at last, he shall bestow eternal life : We must maintain that he is the Head of the church, who alone has a right to prescribe rules for worship, so that none must impose their inventions on his subjects ; and that he is the Person who is to judge the world in righteousness, so that he will appear a second time, in power and great glory, to raise the dead, to take cognizance of the actions of every creature that has sinned, to inflict fulness of torment on the rebel angels, to fix impenitent sinners in ever-during woe, and to place such, for whose sins he has satisfied, in everlasting blessedness. :

We are not, in the course of our ministry, confined wholly to these subjects ; we ought, at proper seasons, to insist upon the perfections of God, on the displays of his wisdom, power, and goodness, in the works of creation and providence ; and on his various dispensations, with regard to the affairs of his church : We are to shew the great depravity of men, by reason of the fall, and the great vanity they are guilty of, in seeking satisfaction in any thing short of the Most High : And as it was not the design of our Redeemer, though he fulfilled and abolished the law, as a

covenant of works, to weaken the obligations his people lie under, to conform to it as a rule of life, we must make known to men the duties it requires, as they are incumbent upon us, whether we are in a private, social, or publick capacity. Tho' these things are not to be wholly omitted, yet we must reckon it a great part of our work, to state, maintain, and defend the glorious doctrines of the blessed gospel, which relate to Christ, and what he has done for us, and which contain the foundation of our hope, as to a better world. Even when we press the duties of the law, we must acquaint men, that it is in Christ's strength only that they can perform them, and that it is absolutely necessary to be found practising them, in order to shew that they are his disciples, and to express their gratitude to him for all his benefits.

If we consider what is the true notion of preaching Christ, and observe what has been the practice of many, we must say, there is the greatest truth in an^e observation, which has lately been made, that there are but few, in our days, who preach Christ, and few that regard him, and that the greatest number of preachers and

^e See Mr. Guise's two sermons, p. 81, &c. al. p. 261, &c. See likewise Mr. Sladen's first sermon on Christ the only foundation, p. 27—36. And the late excellent Mr. Hurrion's knowledge of Christ crucified, p. 299, &c.

hearers seem contented to lay him aside. It is a great shame, and it should be matter of sorrow, that this is the truth of the case; but since it is the real truth, it ought to be spoke: And since matters are so, can we wonder that practical religion is neglected, when Christ is so little preach'd up? Of what avail is it to tell a man, that he must be serious in his behaviour, and circumspect in his walk, that he must beware of the deceitfulness of sin, and that he must be constant in worship, if he is not inform'd in whose strength he must engage in duty, and on whom he must rely for aid against sin, and is left in the dark, as to the end he ought to have in view, in performing what religious service God requires? Men ought to be acquainted, that their performances will never recommend them to God as a Judge, but yet that it is necessary for them to obey the will of their Creator, that may evidence that they have believed in Christ for righteousness; and, till they are convinced of the truth of these things, they will never sincerely regard practical religion: They will either abound in uncommanded rigours and austerities, in order to make God their debtor, or they will soon grow weary of the external part of religion, and look upon it to be mere bodily labour. No duties can be performed with true spiritual pleasure without
faith

faith in Christ; and there is no obedience that can be stiled evangelical holiness, but what is performed in his strength. If then Christ is left out in preaching, as declamations and harangues, which are made about inward and outward piety, must needs be extremely low and lame, so the practice of such whose unhappiness it is to sit under such teaching, will be very short of coming up to what the scripture calls holiness. To tell a man of the noble nature of the Christian virtues, of the beauty of practical godliness, and of the excellence of the gospel morality, without informing him, in whose strength he must act, will have as little efficacy on him, to make him regulate himself, according to the admirable model of duty, which is laid down in scripture, as a long discourse on the desirableness and benefits of health, would be of advantage to promote the recovery of a sick man, if he was not directed to use such means, as might suit his case.

3. The ascribing too much to the power and the performances of fallen man, and too little to the free grace of God, and to the righteousness of Christ, has always been attended with looseness, as to matters of practice, and is one principal cause of the ravages made on piety among us. When God fix'd upon the method of man's recovery,

very, we may be sure he would never promote his salvation, in a way injurious to his divine perfections, neither would he set one attribute at variance with another: He purposed to deliver sinners, in a way in which his absolute sovereignty, his free grace, his inexorable justice, his unsearchable wisdom, his unchangeable truth, his unspotted holiness, his almighty power, his immense goodness, and his rich mercy, might all be equally glorified; and this is by the salvation of his elect by Christ Jesus. The ends which he had in view, in appointing his Son to be the Redeemer of men, and consequently in publishing the glad tidings of great joy, which the everlasting gospel contains, were to depress man as fallen, to exalt Christ, and to promote holiness: When persons then run contrary to God's designs, and strive to exalt the power and the worth of the fallen creature, and to depress the almighty and all-sufficient Saviour, it is no wonder that they are not concerned as they ought, to promote practical godliness, because they endeavour to separate what God will have to be joined together. When men are against exalting free grace, and honouring Christ, it is a jest for them to pretend to be for promoting piety, because, if they really loved God, they would have an equal regard to all the things he had in view, in
saving

saving sinners by Christ: As they are not much concern'd for one part of his design, it cannot be thought that they act from a principle of real love to him, and without this, though they may come under a moral reformation, as to gross sins, it cannot be thought that they will practise true holiness, which the holy scriptures require, in all such as hope to see the Lord.

It has been matter of fact, that whenever a run has been made on the gospel doctrine of justification, by the imputed righteousness of Christ alone, under the idle pretence of its having a tendency to discourage good works, there has been a visible declension in holiness, among such as would appear most concerned to promote, by this, the cause of piety. I know, this is a tender point, and a thing which some do not care to hear of; therefore, that I may not give offence, by saying what might be counted harsh, though it might not be so in reality, I shall choose to give my sense of this matter, not in my own words, but in those of a divine of great judgment, unbiass'd integrity, and eminent piety, who now rests from his labours, and whose praise is in the churches; they are these^s:

^s Mr. Richard Taylor, in his *Scripture-Doctrine of Justification*, p. 204—207. in the second volume of his works.

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“ When the doctrine of justification by faith prevails, the church prospers; but when it falls, the church falls with it: When it is subverted and adulterated, the purity of the doctrine of the gospel, in other things, cannot be preserved: When it is laid aside, and justification by works is brought into its room, a flood of errors comes in with it. This error is the inlet of licentiousness, and destroys the vital part of holiness: Instead of farthering good works, as the favourers of it pretend, it is a barren soil, wherein nothing grows, but the briars and thorns of evil works. The Papacy is a sad instance of this: The generality of the members of the church of Rome are such, as have banish’d from them the very shadow of sobriety, and wallow in the channel of unbounded lust: Their strictest devotees, who boast that they can merit not only for themselves, but others, are more like mad men, than men acted by grace or reason: What are their works, but heaps of idolatry and superstitious fooleries? Christ will only be a strength to them that trust in him for righteousness; they that will not have him for their righteousness, shall not have him for their strength, to enable them to resist temptations, to mortify sin and corruption, and to bring forth the fruits of holiness.

The error of justification by works, brings judgments from God upon a people, that give it any countenance, and forsake the truth. This is verified in the French churches; they receded from the first reformers in the doctrine of justification; this is what the most guilty of them will deny, but it was so evident, that the Papists took notice of it.—The French Protestants did not zealously stick to the doctrine of justification by faith in the righteousness of Christ, as it was transmitted and convey'd down to them, by our reformers; and what follow'd? A decay of piety, and a corruption of manners, which provoked God to scatter and cast them off. I do not speak this to insult over them, but to move us to fear: We have lost the truth in this nation, and we every day more and more lose the Spirit of holiness. What a sensible declension is there in the national English church, since the doctrinal articles, which have the spirit of our first reformers in them, have been cried down, instead of being preached up, by them who yet subscribe to the truth of them? Are not they, who separate from the national church, grown much worse, since the new methodists have found a grateful welcome amongst them? When truth is lost, holiness will not stay behind.

We have a great noise made about works, and yet there was never less working, than there is now among us; which shews, that men do not cry up works from a love to holiness, but only to favour a faction, and to gain credit to their own corrupt opinions. If God does not send forth his light and his truth among us, and if he does not awaken us, to remember from whence we are fallen, that we may ^{look to him for recovery} recover ~~our selves~~, we can expect nothing, but that our sun will set in a cloud; and then, as we shall have our lot to be punish'd after others, so our punishment will be sorer and severer than theirs. What is the spring of a believer's comfort, is now become the ground of contention among us: Much has been preach'd about justification by faith in Christ, and many useful books have been publish'd concerning it; yet there is great darkness among professors about it, and, as they are ignorant of this truth, so they are barren in good works."

These remarks were the result of careful observation, near forty years ago; and the time that has run out since, has only afforded us more opportunity to see with how much skill and judgment they were made. We have gone on to cast more contempt, every day, both upon the glorious doctrine of man's salvation being entirely owing to the free grace of God, and
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on the important point of justification by the righteousness of Christ imputed; and the great pretence has been, men should not hear so much of the privileges, which belong to such as are in Christ, as of the duties required of them, lest they abuse the gospel, and run into Antinomianism. If we either neglect to shew the necessity of relying on Christ for a justifying righteousness, or to evince the need of practising holy duties, we go out of God's way, and cannot expect his blessing: Accordingly we see, that crying up of sincere obedience, to the lessening a regard to Christ's righteousness, has been followed with an encrease of formality and deadness in duty, and with a great neglect of it; so that the following advice of the author, whose words have been quoted, is very proper for us to regard: "Let us pray, that Christianity among us may return to its proper channel, which is this; when men expect the whole of their salvation from Christ, and yet strive to be as fruitful in their lives, as if they expected to be justified by their good works. The greater sense any one has of the free grace of God, the more precise and exact he will be, in the duties of every relation."

4. It is to be fear'd, that the decay of piety is to be attributed, in some measure, to the too general neglect of instructing

young persons in the principles of true Christianity, and to the contempt which has been, of late years, cast upon those judicious and useful forms of sound words, which have been of great advantage to furnish men with just notions of the doctrines which are reveal'd in scripture. Instructing of youth in a catechistical way, has been an ancient practice in the Christian churches; there is sufficient ground for it to be gather'd from the scripture, and it has been a method which Christ has own'd, and greatly blest'd. It is a duty incumbent on Christians to instruct their children, and all others who are under their care, in the doctrinal knowledge of those truths, which they have learned from the scripture, which have been the food of their souls, from the time they were renew'd by divine grace, and the comforts of which they have felt, in all their soul-exercises. And, besides this, it is exceeding profitable for young persons^h to be taught the principles of religion, in a publick manner, by the dispensers of the gospel, who can, with prudence and caution, engage in this work. It must be own'd, that all the instruction we can give, will not bring persons to receive the truth in the love of it, if they

^h See Mr. Hurrion's Sermon on the Good of early Instruction, p. 11—24.

are left without the saving illuminations of the Holy Spirit : It may enlighten the head, but of it self it will not change the heart. However, it is of very great advantage, in many respects, for those who are in their more tender years, to be instructed in the doctrines taught, and in the duties required in scripture. If they have any good thing in them towards the Lord God of Israel, or are under religious impressions, it must be very pleasing and profitable to them, to have the glorious mysteries of the gospel unfolded, and proved from scripture, and to have the duties required of them, in every relation, to be laid before them, from the oracles of the living God. If they are left to themselves, yet by being taught practical duties, they may be the more civilized, may be laid under a greater moral restraint, and may be made more useful members of society. We cannot tell how soon the Spirit of God may work upon such, as, at the present, are in a state of nature, and then they will always find it of vast advantage, to have been instructed in the Christian doctrines; they will feel the power of the truths, of which they only had a speculative notion before, and will encrease in knowledge, as well as grow in grace. When a man receives the truth in the love of it, he will rejoice, if his case is such, that he has not his faith

to seek, as to the system of it, and that he is not at a loss about his duty, as to knowing the matter of it. Such as have been nourish'd up, as the great evangelist Timothy was, in the words of faith and good doctrine, have always proved the wisest and the most useful Christians. They know their Master's will, as to faith and practice, and they are most careful to come up to it. It has been an observation, and it is very just, and confirm'd by experience, that such as have been made partakers of the grace of God, who never were instructed in the doctrines of our Lord Jesus Christ, have been often very warm, sincere, and scrupulous professors of Christianity; but they have been generally either hot and unsettled; or fond of advancing only one truth, and uneasy to hear of any thing else, or ready to admire all preaching, which is suited to move the lower passions, or else prone to run into enthusiasm. On the other hand, when such are converted, as have been brought by instruction to have a good measure of knowledge of the peculiar and distinguishing doctrines of our holy religion, they have been more steady in their adherence to right principles, and more regularly uniform in their conduct. We cannot but say, that there has of late

1 Tim. iv. 6.

been too great a neglect, as to the instructing of youth ; and we find the sad consequences of this, in the ignorance, profaneness, and conceit, which we may observe in the rising generation.

It has been a prevailing custom among us, who separate from the national establishment, to make use of the shorter Catechism of the venerable Assembly of Divines, who met at Westminster, in instructing youth. Of that noble composure it may very justly be said, that for clearness of thought, for comprehending a great deal in a small compass, for treating of the glorious doctrines of the gospel with accuracy, care, and caution, and for speaking of them, in the most just and nervous way, there are few human composures which can be said to exceed it. They who have gone before us, thought themselves happy in having such an excellent form of sound words, to help them in instructing such as were under their inspection : But there is a generation now upon the stage, who defy their fathers as precedents, because they will not come up with them in honesty, zeal, and self-denial. To declaim directly against a composure, which had a testimony in the consciences of all serious Christians, would not have answer'd the end of such as were weary of the truths sum'd up in it ; therefore few who
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have run into neutrality and lukewarmness, have ventured to say, that they look'd upon it to comprehend a heap of false opinions. They have been more artful in their management, they have told such as would listen to them, that the words of scripture are certainly the best, that Catechisms should be drawn up in the expressions of the inspired writers; that if we pay a regard to human forms, to creeds, confessions, and systems of divinity, framed by men subject to mistake, we deny the sufficiency of scripture, and set the performances of fallible creatures on a level with the words of the infallible God: By these insinuations, they who have used them have led many off from all regards to truth and practical religion. If they had cried out against any summary of principles apprehended to be Christian, as containing points inconsistent with scripture, none would have blamed them, for going according to their light, though we might have taken the liberty to have counted their light darkness: But for men to abstract from the consideration, whether the creeds and catechisms, which have been in use, are agreeable to scripture or no, and gravely and solemnly to talk against them, and to run them down, merely because they are human compositions, as incroachments on the sufficiency of scripture, is what contri-

butes exceedingly to the increase of infidelity. All things composed by men ought to be tried by the scripture standard: If they are not agreeable to the oracles of the living God, let them be rejected with contempt and disdain; but if they contain just accounts of what lies scatter'd in different parts of the book of God, it can answer no end to run them down as human forms, except it be to disparage that religion, on the side of which the composers of them were. It is said by some, who have borrow'd the pretence from the Socinians and the Jesuits, that it is sufficient for men to assent to the words of scripture; and perhaps it might be so, if there were no knaves in the world, and no wolves in sheeps cloathing in the church. Christians do not use the caution they ought, if they only enquire, whether a man professes to own the Bible to contain his religion; they are principally concern'd to be satisfied how he, who would thrust himself into their esteem, understands the words of that which they take for their rule of faith, and for their directory in practice; that they may judge whether he is a disciple of Christ or no.

In former days, when the excellent summaries of Christian faith and practice were valued, and highly esteem'd, because it was concluded they were founded on scrip-
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ture, practical religion flourish'd : But what a disagreeable turn have matters taken, since we have heard them run down, because they were drawn up by men? Some, who have heard their guides rail at them, and ridicule them, as human forms, and the impositions of men, have been induced to think, that all the points laid down and sum'd up in them, were human inventions, and they have gone farther than their leaders intended they should : They have not only deserted the doctrines which their teachers hated, but they have cast off all regards to practical duties, and have manifested the utmost contempt of publick worship, and of the sabbath. It is greatly to be wish'd, that some who have been most violent in railing against standing up for controverted points, in declaiming against creeds, confessions, and catechisms, in abusing all open declarations as to matters of faith, and in recommending licentiousness and lukewarmness, under the false names of liberty and charity, would think what they have been doing. They have thrown down the banks, which were raised to keep out infidelity and error, and, seeing they have let these come in like a raging sea, it is not to be wonder'd at, if they are not able to keep the tide out, by opposing the palms of their hands to it.

5. The great cause of all the present corruptions in practice, is the contempt which has, for many years, been cast on the Holy Spirit, and his operations. It has been too common for the Holy Spirit to be left out in preaching upon duty, and it has been too general a thing to neglect putting such as are press'd to regard the salvation of their souls, on keeping up in their minds a continual sense of their being able to do nothing aright, without his aid and assistance. Moral suasion has been talk'd of, as being fit in it self to bring men to a sense of their duty; and such as are for looking up for assistance, for aid, and for consolation to the Holy One, are vilified, as persons phrensical and delirant. We have grieved and offended the Spirit of grace, and he, in a great measure, is withdrawn and gone; and, since he is absent, we find that ordinances are of little use to them that, in a formal way, converse in them; consequently it is no wonder that he does not regard the despisers of ordinances, or them who cast open and avowed contempt on those sacred provisions, which it is his office to bless.

It may, with too much justice, be said, that never was the Holy Spirit more condemn'd, and consequently more provoked, for a long series of time, by any that have kept up an external profession of Christianity, than

than he has been among us of late years. His Deity is by many denied, and endeavours are used to reduce him to the rank of creatures, nay, to make him created by a creature; and some opiniated persons, who would affect to be dictators, take upon them to prescribe it as proper, to worship him directly only occasionally, as prudence and expedience may require, and not to bind it upon our own consciences, or upon others, as a necessary thing: His real personality is opposed by some, and we are told, by projectors, that he is only a divine Power personalized by some idioms of speech; and our Lord's promise, which contain'd in it, what he design'd for the comfort of all Christians, since the heavens have received him, as to his bodily presence, that the Spirit of truth should come, or that the Person of the Spirit should make a more plentiful effusion of his gifts upon them, is made nothing of, by this bold figment, that our Lord described a divine power by a strong prosopoeia, and a noble allegory, as a messenger sent from God: It is hard to say how the blessed Spirit, the Comforter of the elect of God, could well be more affronted, than in being treated thus: Great provocations are offer'd him, by such as do not profess to run the length of denying his personality and divine glory;
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his work, as a quickening renewing Spirit, is denied, and what can only be brought about in the soul of a sinner, by his effi-
ciance, in enlightening the understanding, bowing the will, and purifying the affections, is, by many, ascribed either entirely, or in part, to the free will of man. How has praying by the Spirit been profanely ridiculed by one sort of men? And what has been the effect? Fervent prayer has been, in a manner, lost among them, and they are given up to a lifeless formality: But these are not the persons with whom we are more immediately concern'd. To come nearer home: What contempt is cast on the Spirit's motions, as a Convincer, an Instructor, and a Comforter? How is his sealing up believers to the day of redemption, or witnessing with their spirits, that they are the children of God, treated with banter and grimace? How are all that profess to depend on his conduct exposed, as being under the power of enthusiasm, by many who profess Christianity? What sneering folly do some demure formalists shew, when a word is said of his enabling us to will and to do, of his good pleasure? What is the melancholic consequence of all this? The Comforter is much withdrawn. Hence it arises, that the work of conversion is very much at a stand; few are now seen enquiring the way to
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Sion, with their faces thitherward; and they, who have long profess'd religion, have grey hairs increasing upon them, and are under great decays and declensions. There is no question to be made, but that, in these times of sad degeneracy, the Spirit revives some serious zealous Christians with his strong consolations; yet it must be said, that he does not make the preaching of the gospel so effectual for instruction, edification, and comfort, to great numbers, as he formerly did. Sinners may now be alarm'd with the thunders of mount Sinai, and be allured with the still small voice from the palaces of Sion, and yet they continue fearless and stupid, senseless and unaffected. Professing Christians now often sit before God as his people, and are found in the external performance of ordinances, and yet go away as dull and heavy, as full of formality and deadness, as if they had not been engaged in them. The reason is, the Holy Spirit does not accompany the word preach'd with his blessing, and does not cloath his ordinances with power; he withdraws from us, whose presence was the glory of our assemblies; and he leaves us to feel the effects of our mad ingratitude, in grieving him, in slighting his motions, and in casting contempt on his Person and operations: And if the Spirit departs, as a Spirit of conviction

viction and comfort, it is no wonder that we have reason to complain of our leanness and barrenness, under the enjoyment of the best means.

THE APPLICATION.

I. Since we are forced to say, if we will be impartial, that we are under great decays, as to practical religion, let us endeavour to have a deep sense of our declensions, and of the true causes of them. We have often been told, that some reasons why religion is weaken'd, are these: The people are amused too much with speculative doctrines, and with disputes, and are taught to pay an unwarrantable regard to human forms and decisions; and it is very likely, that some have work'd themselves up to a belief of these insinuations; but there is matter of fact to be set against such idle surmises. Where-ever the truths of the gospel have been most preached, in their purity, and where the professors of Christianity have been most cautious, as to giving them up, there has a regard to strict serious religion most prevail'd. It may be said, that decays prevail among all sorts now; but it must be aver'd, that they who have the highest notions, about the importance of the controverted doctrines of the gospel, and who express their value for
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those forms of sound words, which state them safely, are the persons among whom practical godliness flourishes most. We should strive then to be sensible of the true causes of our spiritual decays; for unless we know from what they proceed, we cannot remember from whence we have fallen, we cannot rightly repent of our backslidings, and we cannot do our first works; and, unless we do these things, we shall only grow worse and worse, and shall every day offer new provocations to the great King of the church; and, if we go on to stir up his displeasure afresh, his patience may be tired out, and he may come upon us, to avenge on us the quarrel of his covenant, more suddenly than we may expect, and more severely than we may imagine.

Let us, when we are sensible of the declensions which prevail among us, examine what we have done to offend God: Let us not be wholly taken up in accusing others, but let every man among us finite upon his breast, and say, What have I done towards promoting a general declension? Let us search into all the secret chambers of imagery in our hearts, and, if we find any idol of jealousy erected, let us immediately cast it down, and destroy it: If, upon trying our spirits, we find we
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have done any thing to provoke God, let us abhor our selves for it ; let us be deeply humbled, and really contrite for it, and let us forsake it, with a true repentance: Let us shew noble examples of defensible singularity, in running counter to general corruption: Let us stand up for the truths of the gospel, when it is fashionable to run them down ; let us worship God according to the pattern given in his word, when it is too common to offer strange fire on his altar ; let us not forsake the assembling of our selves together, when many leave the courts of Sion to follow their pleasures ; let our houses resound with the voice of prayer, when those of others are without having the morning and evening sacrifice offer'd up in them ; let us be shining examples of holiness and purity, and stand at a distance from insincerity, when others abound in dissoluteness and in acts of fraud ; let us bewail the sins of others, which we cannot reform: When the herd of ungodly sinners go on, without fear, to make void the law, when Atheism, Deism, and error, come in like floods, when iniquity abounds, and profaneness rides in triumph, and when professors have lost their first love, let us be among the number of them, who mourn over the abominations which too much prevail ; let us wrestle in prayer with God

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the Holy Spirit, that he would not depart from us, but that he would still govern in our hearts, and fill our assemblies: Let us, with fervency, cry, Come, Holy Ghost, eternal God, look down on the languishing state of the Christian interest among us; when Atheism and Deism break in upon us, as a raging sea, say thou, Hitherto shall you come, and no farther, and here shall your proud waves be staid; when errors and heresies rush in like a flood, lift thou up a standard against them; cause the light of truth to shine forth, like the sun in its full strength, to scatter the fogs and mists of error; kindle the love of professors that waxes cold; inflame them with a pious zeal for the truth; restore a Spirit of peace and true moderation; cheque that profaneness that rolls in like a mighty torrent; cause holiness to run down our streets as a river, and righteousness to glide through our land, like a peaceful stream: Be to us a refreshing dew; cause our wilderness and our solitary places to be glad, and our desert to rejoice, and blossom as the rose; shed thy benign influences upon us, that we may grow as the lilly, that we may revive as the corn, that we may be fruitful as the vine, that our beauty may be as the olive tree, and that we may strike down our roots, spread forth our branches, and
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rise in a graceful towering height, like the cedar : Be thou, O Comforter, our glory, and our defence ; abundantly bless the provisions of Sion, endue the ministers of the gospel with righteousness, and cloath the ordinances of the sanctuary with power ; be thou in the midst of us, and then we shall not be called, forsaken, and desolate, neither shall it be said of us, that the glory is departed, but the name whereby we shall be called, shall be Jehovah Shammah, the Lord is there.

2. Since a defection from the faith of the gospel lies at the root of all our abominations, let us be zealous for the truth, and contend earnestly for the faith once deliver'd to the saints. In this day of blasphemy and rebuke, lukewarmness and indifferency, we may expect to have many to weaken our hands, and occasion us sorrow of heart ; but we know little of the state of things among us, if we expect to have very many to afford us help, when we are engaged in the cause of the Lord against the mighty. However, this ought not to move us from our duty ; for Christ the Lord of hosts is with us, when we plead for his honour and his truth, and, if our labours are not crown'd with success, we have done our duty, we have the testimony of a good conscience, and we have deli-

deliver'd our souls. Our blessed Lord declared, that in the declining church of Sardis he had a few names, who had not defiled their garments, who should walk with him in white, for they were worthy. Let us be among the happy few, who are valiant for the truth in the earth, that when we appear before our great Master, he may say to us, Well done, good and faithful servants, enter you into my joy; you shall walk before me in the white attire of innocence, you have been faithful to my cause, I will grace your brows with the diadems of immortality. We should consider that it is the noblest of causes in which we are engaged; to contend for our civil liberties against tyrants, and to strive for our spiritual privileges against imposers and persecuters, is an honourable contest: But this is not what we are called to at present; we are concern'd in matters of vastly greater importance to the well-being of our souls, though, perhaps, not to the quiet of our lives, or the securing our worldly interest: We contend for the supreme honour of God, as the Ruler of the world, and as the universal Law-giver and Judge, against such as would set up moral fitnesses independent of him, and would not be reckon'd to be made for him, or to be accountable to him: We strive for the perfection of scripture against such as would

make natural light, in our corrupt state, a perfect rule : We maintain, that Christ and the Holy Spirit are proper persons, against such as represent them to be powers, attributes, or mere names : We plead for their divine glories against such as would reduce them to the rank of creatures : We stand up for the absoluteness and immutability of God's decrees, against such as would make him dependent on the creature, and alterable in his purposes : We appear in defence of the infinite value of Christ's satisfaction, and the perfection of his righteousness, against such as would put their obedience in his room, or tack the shreds of their crippled duties to the robe of salvation he has provided : We stand up for efficacious grace, and the power of the Spirit, against those who plead for man's free will ; and for the final progress of believers in holiness, against them that would insinuate that such as Christ died for may be lost : We contend for holiness against such as abuse the doctrine of grace, and turn it into wantonness, and for the perfection of the law, against such as would have it abrogated, or to be of no use : We argue for the activity of the soul after death, for the resurrection of the body, and for a general judgment, against such as would make man cease to be, sleep in the grave, live always without his body, and not be accountable

countable for his actions. This is the honourable service in which we are engaged ; and can such poor 'unworthy creatures, as we are, have a post of greater dignity ? Let us then be never slothful or negligent, but let us contend earnestly for the truth : We are commanded in scripture to do so ; therefore, if we are by some blamed for infringing on peace, let us not regard so senseless a calumny ; and if others accuse us of taking the Spirit's work out of his hand, let us pity them for putting so daring an affront on Christ, who has commanded us to strive for his truth, and forgive them for throwing out such a vile abuse against us. Let us never be weary of well doing ; but the more opposition we meet with, as good soldiers of Christ, the more let us contend for the honour of our exalted Master : Let us always fight under the banner of the great Captain of our salvation ; let us use no weapons but what we fetch for the armory of God, and let us leave the issue to him whose cause we plead ; and, for our encouragement, let us consider, that he, under whose conduct we strive, will support us in our difficult warfare, and will, after we have sweat in the field of battle, as long as he has determined, give us a quiet discharge, and will bring us to the deathless realms of joy, where the noise of discord will

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cease, where we shall see our Redeemer as he is, and where, with angels and arch-angels, we shall for ever praise and adore him.

To the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, three divine Persons, and the one God, be all supreme honour, glory, and power ascribed, in all the churches, now, henceforth, and for evermore. Amen.

F I N I S.



E R R A T A.

The reader is desired particularly to correct the following errors of the press.

VOL. I. Page 91. Line 14. for Xanfu, read Cum-fu-cu.
 P. 94. l. 8. for Arian, r. Arrian. L. 9. for Antonius, r. Marc Antonine. Ibid. for Plutonists, r. Platonics.
 Vol. II. Page 343. Line 6. for that are not, r. but what are.





